MANGA

# REBORN AS A SPACE MERCENARY

I WOKE UP PILOTING THE STRONGEST STARSHIP!

ART:
Shunichi Matsui

STORY:
Ryuto

CHARACTER DESIGN:
Tetsuhiro Nabeshima

chf

Go ahead.

fwip

UHH...

SO, I'M JOINING THE FLEET AS A TACTICAL ADVISOR.

AHEM.

Chapter 16

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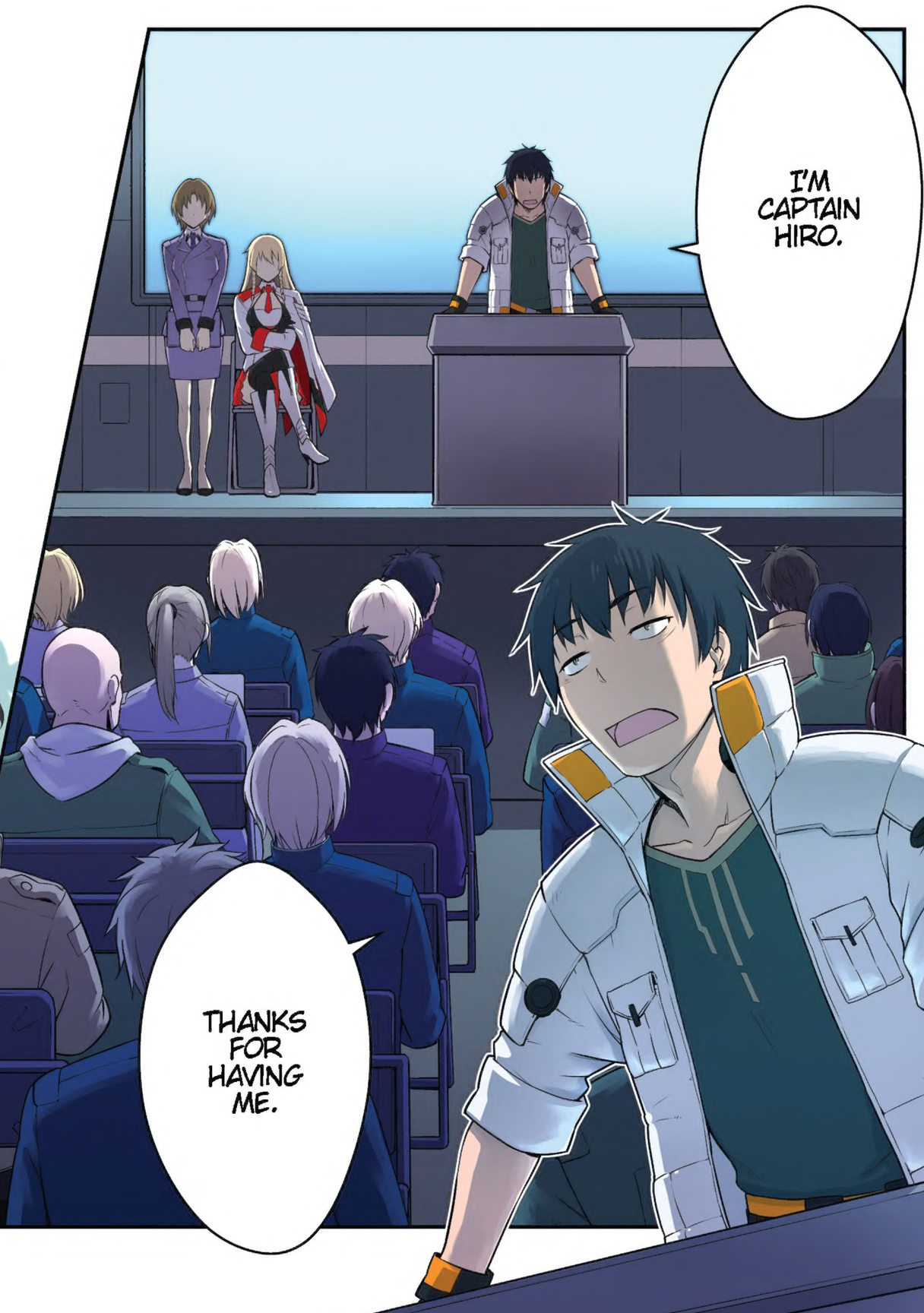
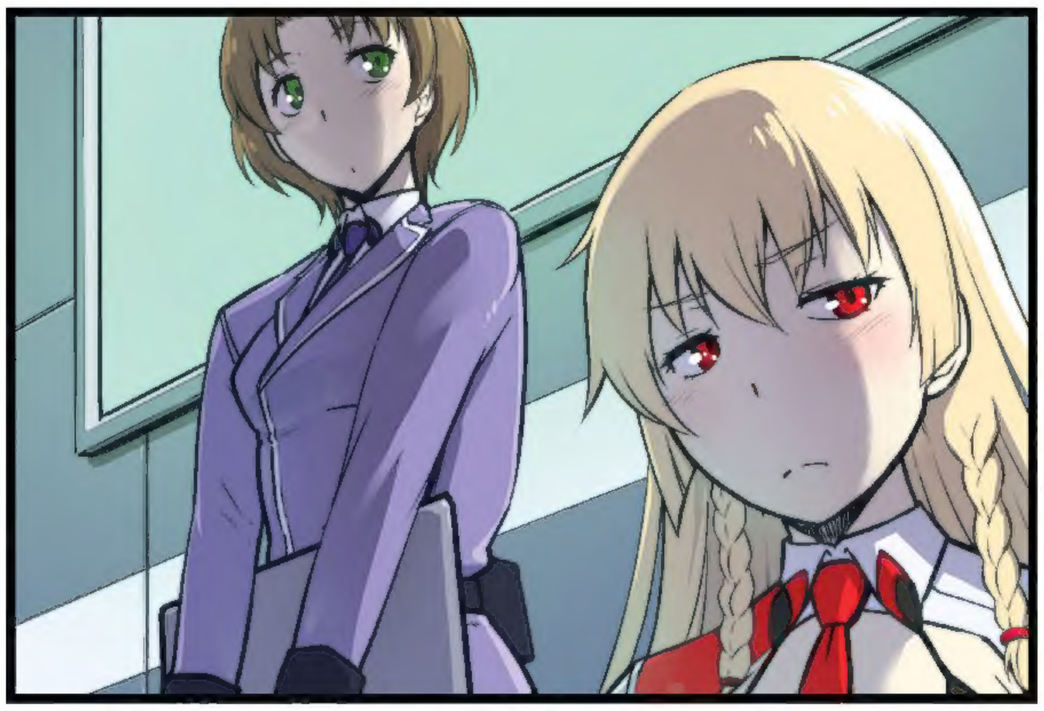
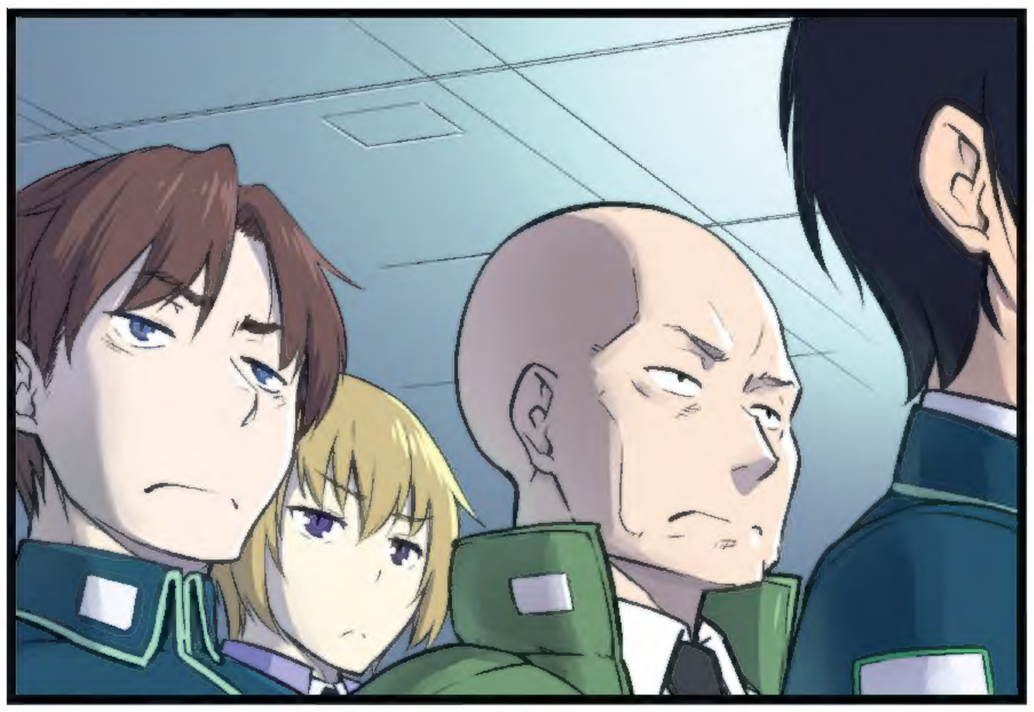
Volume 4: Stopover in the Arein System - Part 2



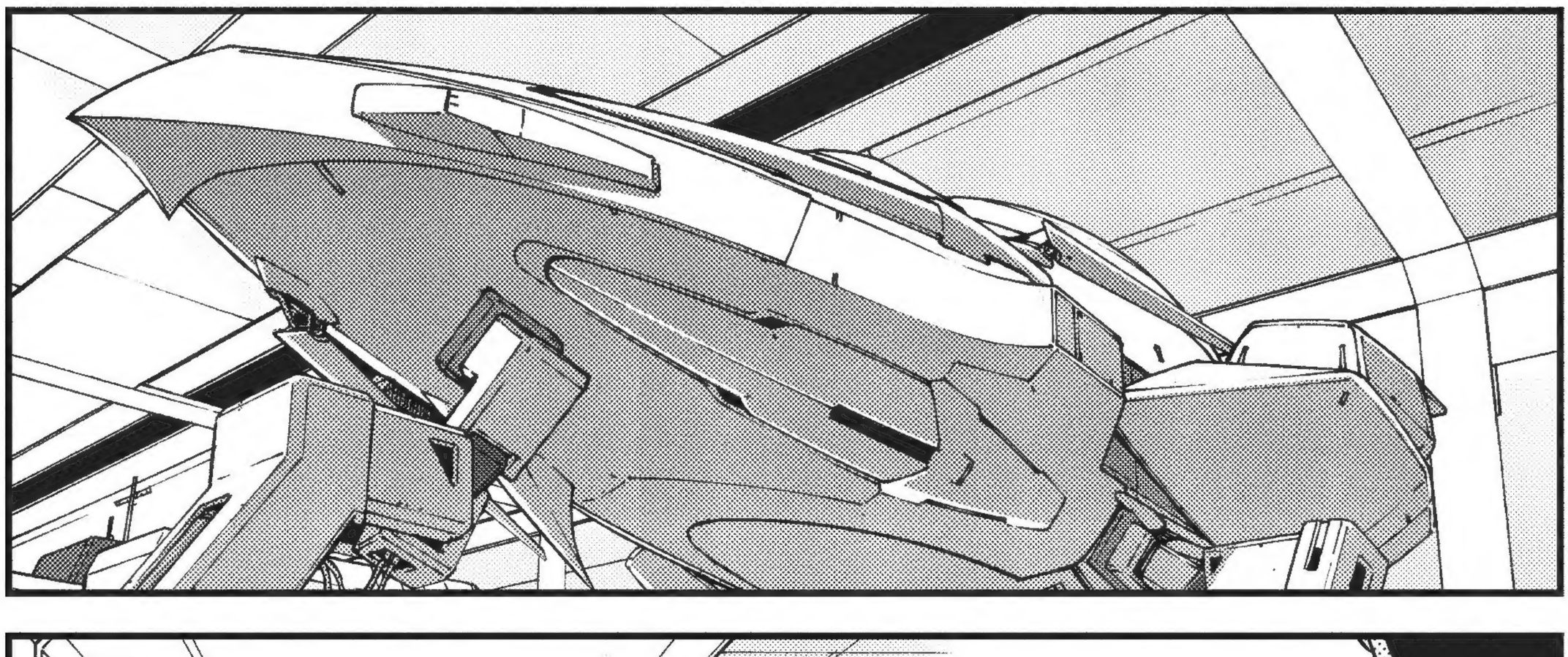


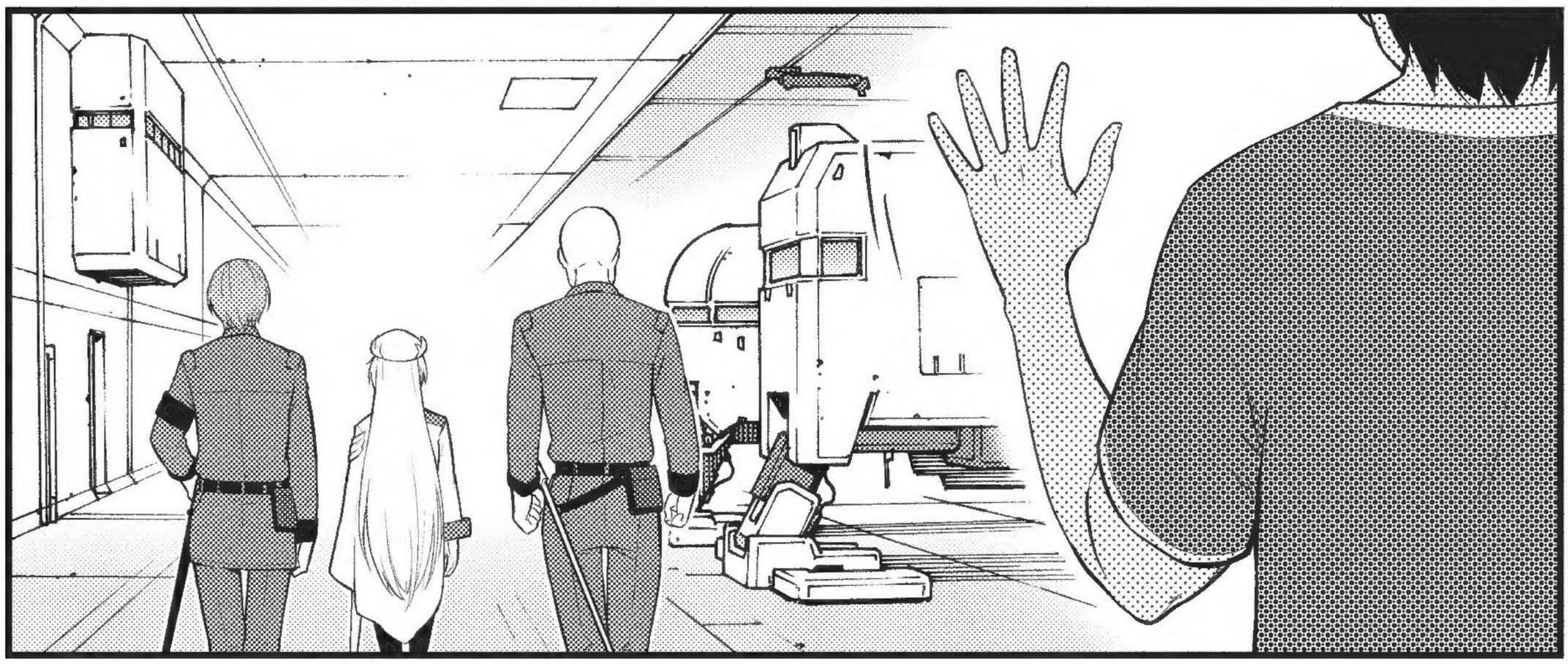


Sigh...

.....

IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...





THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.
?

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'D TALK TO NOBILITY LIKE THAT... THE MARQUESS'S DAUGHTER, NO LESS.

Sigh...
SHE'S PRETTY SERIOUS ABOUT THIS WHOLE IDEA, HUH?
EVEN AFTER ALL THAT, SHE LAUGHED, AND ALL'S FORGIVEN.

I'M SAYING THAT YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE NOBILITY IS GONNA GET YOU KILLED!

SHWIP

IT IS?

Sigh...

OKAY, LOOK.

.....

.....

AFTER THAT STUNT, SHE COULD'VE KILLED US ALL AND NO ONE WOULD CARE.

UGH, TYPICAL.

HUH?

THAT DOESN'T MEAN THEY JUST GO AROUND MURDERING PEOPLE, OF COURSE.

BUT AS LONG AS THEY EXPLAIN THEIR "REASON," THEY *CAN* DO IT.

LISTEN, A NOBLE CAN KILL A NON-NOBLE FOR ANY REASON AND GET OFF SCOT-FREE.

BASICALLY, SHE COULD'VE LOPPED YOUR HEAD OFF BACK THERE, AND NO ONE WOULD'VE BATTED AN EYE.

LIKE IF SOMEONE WERE TO, I DUNNO, *INSULT THEM?*

.....

THEY SURE ARE.

YEAH.

YEESH, NOBLES ARE CRAZY.

Y- YEAH...

Flinch

GUESS YOUR OLD UNIVERSE MUST'VE BEEN REAL PEACEFUL.

JUST WATCH WHAT YOU SAY, GOT IT?

?

BAD NEWS...

I THINK YOUR LACK OF COMMON SENSE ABOUT THIS UNIVERSE IS WHAT WORRIES ME MOST.

YOU DONE? THAT ONE KINDA HURT, Y'KNOW.

Sigh...

SHE'S BAD NEWS.

SHE'S DANGER-OUS...

ゴゴゴ"

FWOOOOOOM...

ゴゴゴ"

UHH... MIMI, YOU GOOD?

ゴゴゴ"

mumble

mumble

CAPTAIN.

YEAH?

THINGS ARE LOOKIN' PRETTY GOOD!

A-ANYWAY, WE'RE BETWEEN BATTLES, WE'VE GAINED A NOBLE'S FAVOR, *AND* WE'RE MAKING MONEY.

PLEASE BE CAREFUL AROUND HER.

GLARE

YES, MA'AM.

. . . .

YEAH, YOU BETTER NOT FALL FOR THAT WOMAN'S WILES.

HOW ABOUT YOU HAVE A BIT OF FAITH IN ME?

WOULDN'T BE THE FIRST TIME IT HAPPENED.

URK...

SO...

THIS FLEET, AS LED BY LIEUTENANT COMMANDER SERENA...

I'VE BEEN INVITED TO JOIN, BASED ON MY EXPERIENCE FIGHTING PIRATES.

I'M GOING TO TEACH YOU HOW TO TRICK AND TRACK THEM DOWN...

WAS CREATED FOR THE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF TURNING PIRATES INTO SPACE DEBRIS.

AND ALSO HOW TO TAKE THEM OUT.

I DON'T EXPECT ACTUAL SOLDIERS TO USE ALL MY MERCENARY TRICKS...

BUT I HOPE YOU CAN AT LEAST REFERENCE THEM.

YOUR JOB IS TO MASTER THESE TACTICS AND PUT THEM TO USE IN ACTUAL COMBAT.

THAT'S MY INTRO SPIEL.

IN ANY CASE, WE'RE FACING THE SAME ENEMY, SO LET'S KEEP IT RESPECTFUL AND WORK HARD.

CLAP

THANKS FOR THE PITY APPLAUSE...

CLAP

CLAP

CLAP

FORGIVE ME, BUT COULD YOU MAKE IT SNAPPY WITH THE LECTURE?

YES, MA'AM.

MOSTLY, PIRATES WORK IN THREE- TO FIVE-SHIP SQUADS.

THEIR MAIN ARMAMENTS ARE ENERGY WEAPONS. SO YOU'LL SEE LOTS OF SEEKER MISSILES AND MULTI-TURRETS.

LET'S START BY UNDERSTANDING WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST WITH THESE PIRATES.

BIP

THEY SURROUND TARGETED CIVILIAN SHIPS, OVERSATURATE THE SHIELDS, AND CAPTURE.

INDIVIDUALLY, THEY'RE NOT THAT POWERFUL, BUT WHEN THEY WORK IN TANDEM, THEIR COMBINED FIREPOWER IS NOTHING TO SCOFF AT.

NEXT, LET'S TALK ABOUT THEIR SHIPS.

GOT ALL THAT?

THAT'S THEIR USUAL SCHTICK, ANYWAY.

BUT THAT'S JUST THEIR BASE MODEL. THEY REMODEL AND UPGRADE AS NEEDED.

THE PIRATES MOSTLY USE CAPTURED CIVILIAN SHIPS.

THE SHIELDING AND ARMOR ARE USUALLY SHODDY.

AND THEY TEND TO PRIORITIZE WEAPONS AND THRUSTERS.

BECAUSE THEY WANT TO GET IN AND OUT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE?

WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IS?

FOR PIRATES, SPEED IS EVERYTHING.

THAT'S RIGHT.

THE LONGER THEY TAKE, THE HIGHER THE CHANCE OF BEING DISCOVERED BY MERCENARIES OR THE MILITARY.

AND LIKE I SAID, THEY'RE ESPECIALLY AFRAID OF THE MILITARY.

BASICALLY, THEY DON'T PLAN TO ATTACK ANYONE THAT'LL FIGHT BACK, NOR ANYONE LOOKING FOR A FIGHT.

SOUNDS ABOUT RIGHT.

THEY NEVER REALLY ENGAGE.

THE MOST THEY'VE EVER FOUGHT WAS DURING OUR BASE ATTACK.

IF THEY THINK THERE'S MILITARY AROUND, THEY WON'T COME ANYWHERE CLOSE. AND IF THE MILITARY SUDDENLY APPEARS, PIRATES TURN TAIL AND RUN.

THAT'S TRUE...

UNFORTUNATELY, THE PIRATES AROUND HERE LIKELY ALREADY KNOW ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF THIS UNIT.

BUT...

POINT BEING THE PIRATES ARE VERY SENSITIVE TO THE PRESENCE OF THE MILITARY.

AFTER ALL, THEY'RE GONNA PASS AS LOCALS IN THE COLONY, GATHERING INTEL.

THERE'S NOT MUCH YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT.

INDEED, I'LL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT.

I'M JUST HERE TO TEACH ABOUT SPACE COMBAT.

THAT'S OUTSIDE MY FIELD OF EXPERTISE, THOUGH.

THESE TWO MAPS SHOW THE TARMEIN SYSTEM.

BEFORE AND AFTER IMAGES OF THE SEARCH AND DESTROY OPERATION THAT WE CARRIED OUT RECENTLY.

BIP

chatter

chatter

AS YOU CAN SEE, THE PIRATES ARE ACTIVE IN COMPLETELY DIFFERENT AREAS NOW.

IT'S PRETTY CLEAR THAT SOMEONE'S LEAKING INTEL TO THE PIRATES.

CHANCE ENCOUNTERS AND OTHER PIRATE SIGHTINGS ALL *JUST* OUTSIDE THE IMPERIAL FLEET'S SURVEILLANCE AREAS.

*VERY* INTERESTING, CAPTAIN.

I WAS CORRECT TO HIRE YOU.

I THINK THAT ABOUT COVERS THE BASICS.

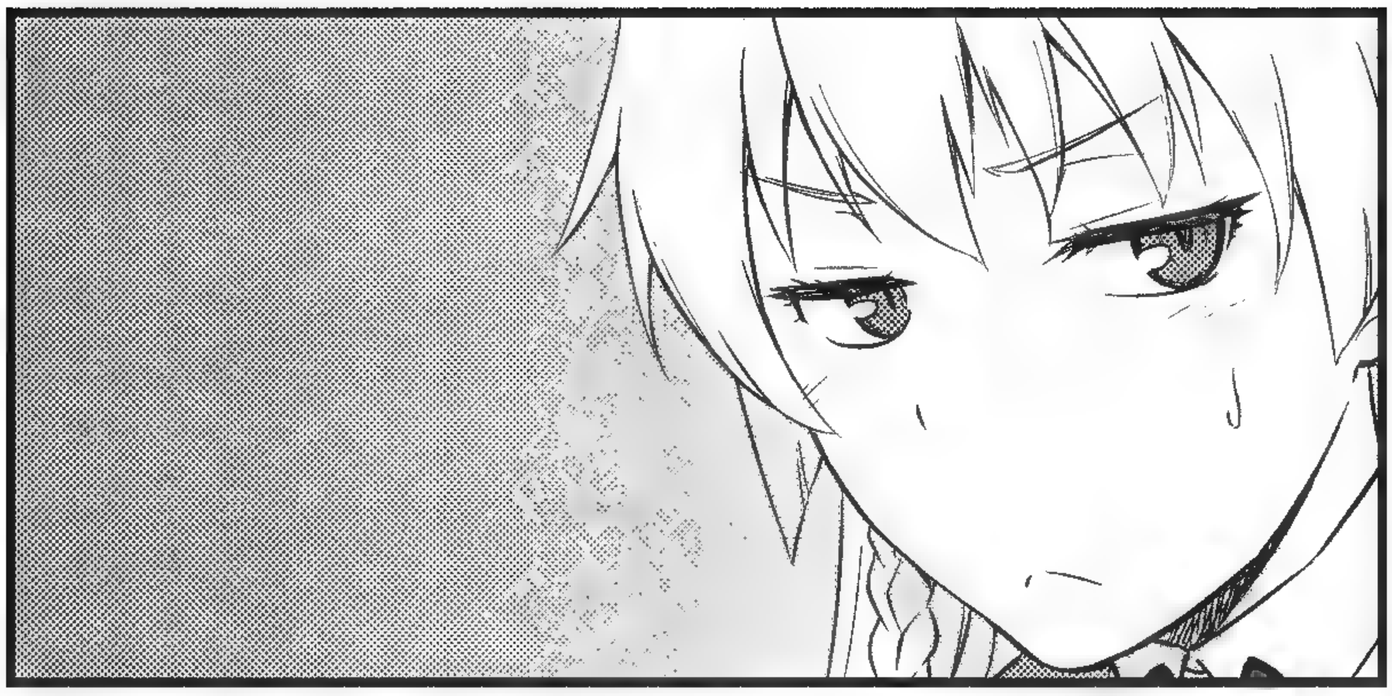
I COLLECT AND USE THIS DATA TO DETERMINE WHERE THEY'RE MOST ACTIVE.

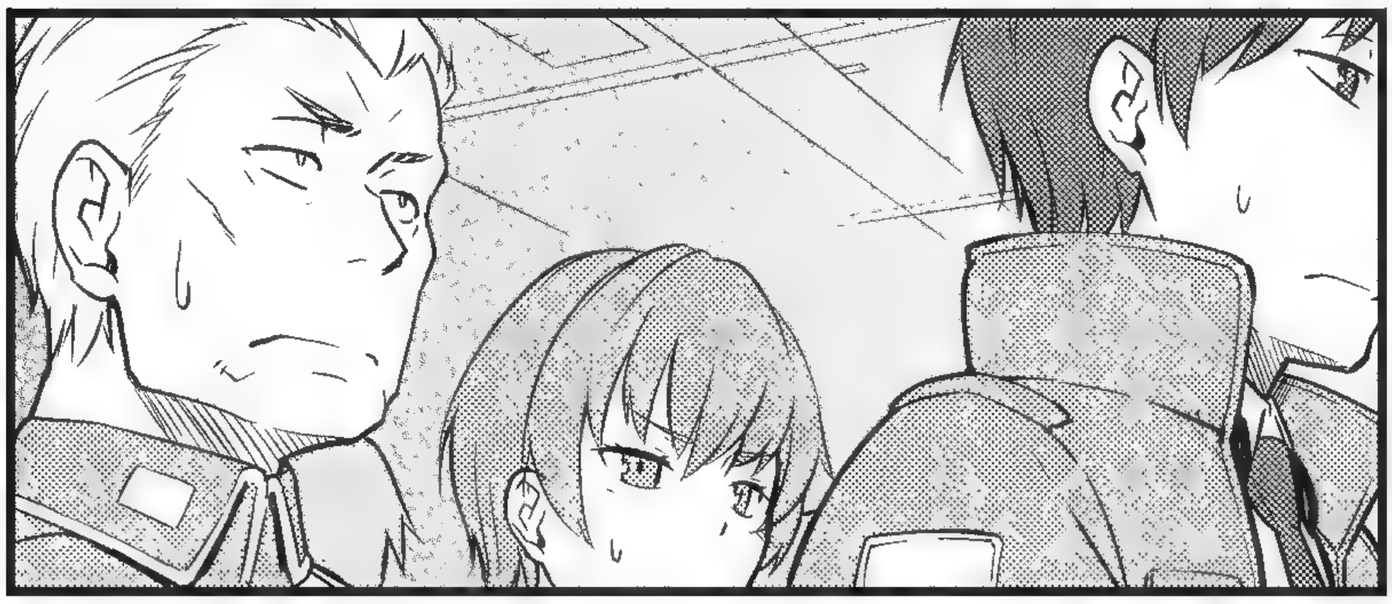
Dunno if other mercs do that...

SO, TAKING ALL OF THAT INTO ACCOUNT...

Got it.

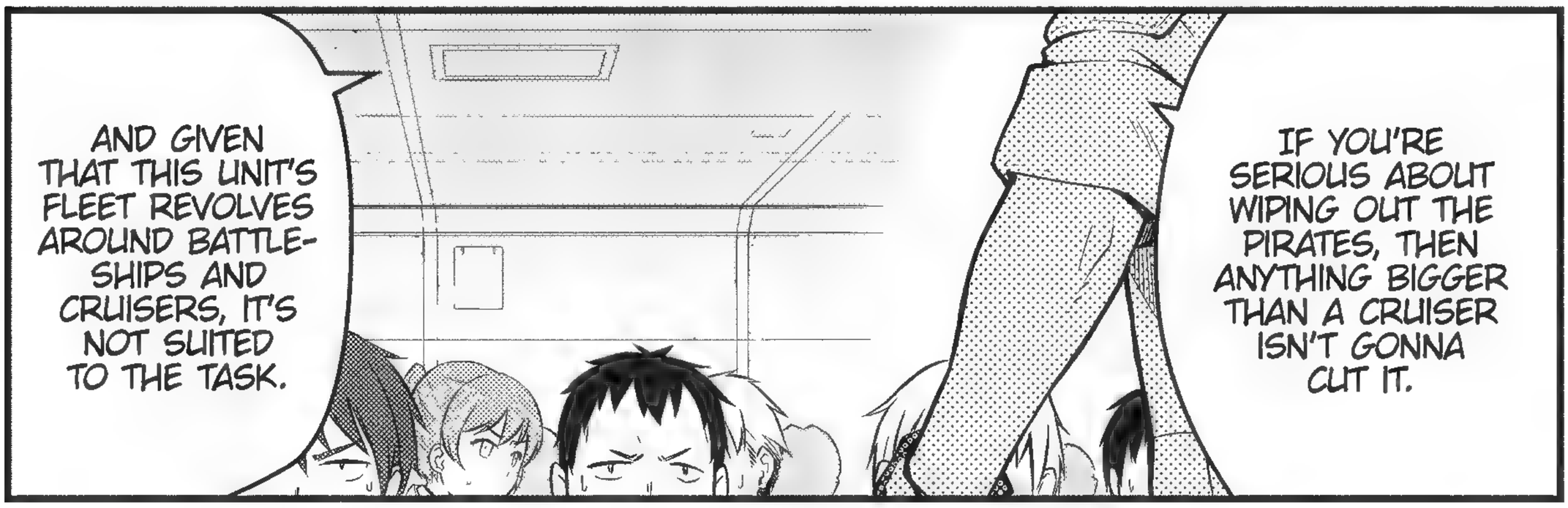
PLEASE, CONTINUE.





WHAT CAN THE PIRATE-HUNTING UNIT DO ABOUT THEM?

I'LL BE HONEST...
I THINK THE FLEET'S BASIC COMPOSITION NEEDS TO BE REWORKED.


AND GIVEN THAT THIS UNIT'S FLEET REVOLVES AROUND BATTLE-SHIPS AND CRUISERS, IT'S NOT SUITED TO THE TASK.
IF YOU'RE SERIOUS ABOUT WIPING OUT THE PIRATES, THEN ANYTHING BIGGER THAN A CRUISER ISN'T GONNA CUT IT.

YOU THINK HUGE SHIPS LIKE THAT ARE GONNA BE ABLE TO MANEUVER EFFECTIVELY IN COMBAT?

THEY'RE NOT.

THE PIRATES ARE MOST ACTIVE NEAR ASTEROID BELTS AND NEARBY DEBRIS FIELDS.

HOWEVER...

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONCERN.

DESTROYERS, MAYBE. BUT I'D RECOMMEND CORVETTES.

GRANTED, THAT'S JUST MY OPINION, BUT PLEASE DO LOOK INTO IT.

BUT HOW ARE THE MINERS GOING TO FEEL ABOUT THAT?

TRUE, THAT'S ONE WAY OF DEALING WITH THE PIRATES.

IF THE PIRATES ARE HIDING IN AN ASTEROID BELT, WHY NOT SIMPLY USE THE FIRE-POWER OF OUR LARGE SHIPS TO OBLITERATE THEM, ASTEROIDS AND ALL?

TAKE OUT THE PIRATES YOUR WAY, AND YOU'LL ALSO BE DESTROYING MINER LIVELIHOODS.

ASTEROID BELTS ARE CHOCK FULL OF VALUABLE RESOURCES.

IT'S THEIR BREAD AND BUTTER.

THAT SAID, I'M FULLY AWARE THAT YOU CAN'T JUST SWITCH SHIPS IN AND OUT WILLY-NILLY.

SO, HERE'S MY IDEA.

I SEE...

ARE YOU PREPARED TO SAFEGUARD THE EMPIRE'S CITIZENS BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY?

HM?

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER SERENA.

grin

YES, OF COURSE. AS A PROUD NOBLE OF THE EMPIRE, I WILL DO ANYTHING WITHIN MY POWER...

*ANYTHING?*

*A FEW DAYS LATER...*

*ERM, AT PRESENT...*

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

HA HA HA HA HA HA!

WE HAVE DETECTED THIRTY-TWO SHIPS.

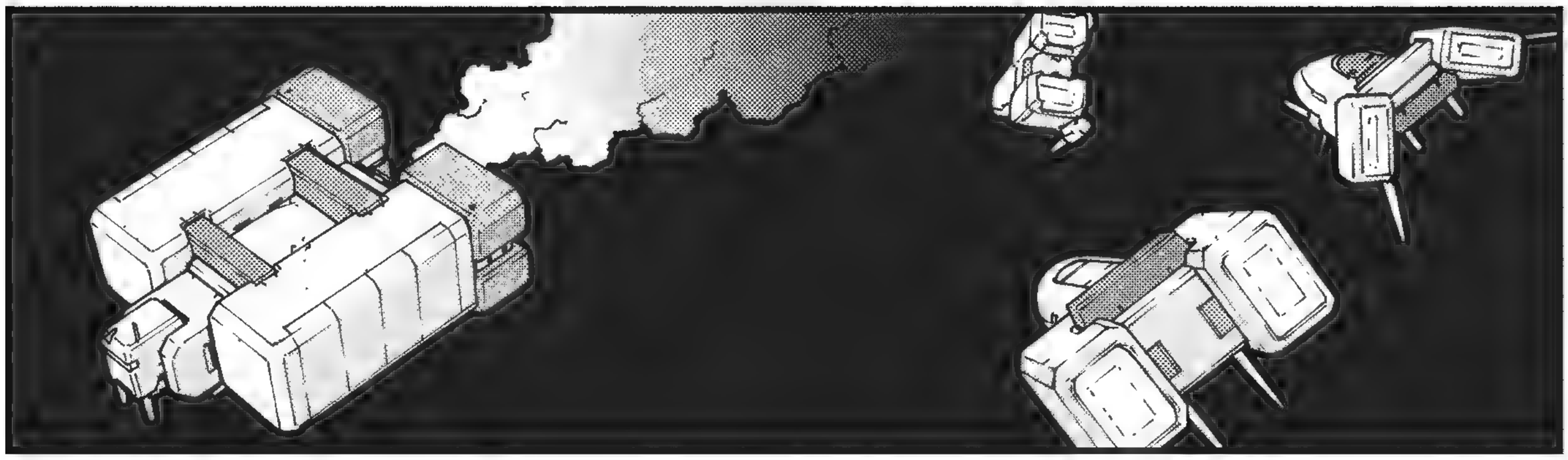
YES, THEY CERTAINLY DO.

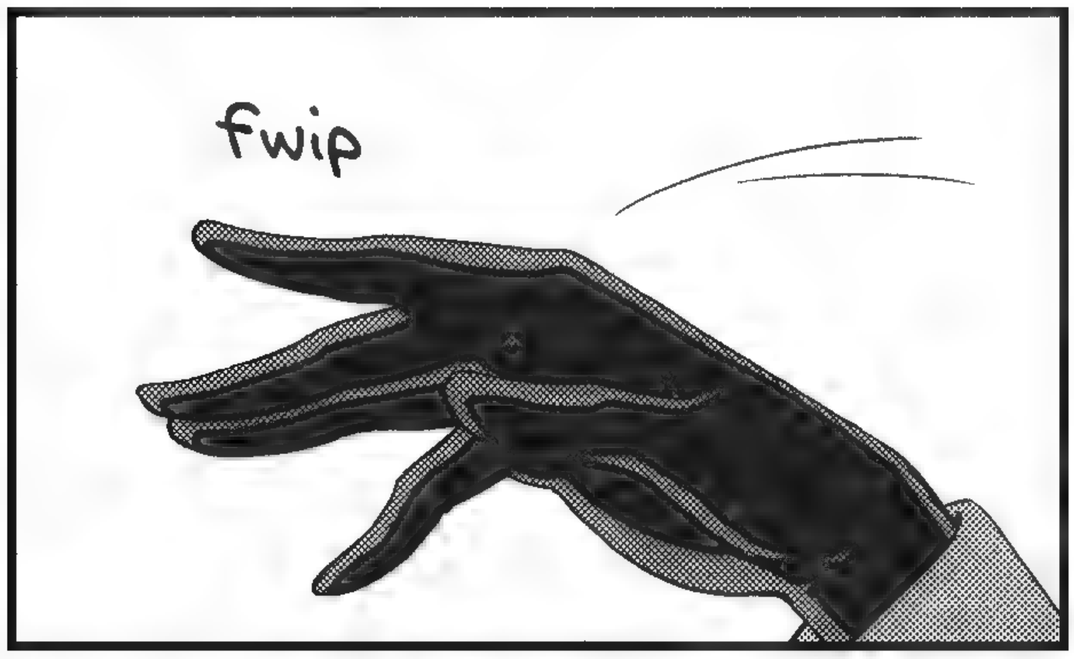
THEY JUST KEEP TAKING THE BAIT, *EH?*

ADDITIONAL TARGETS DETECTED!!

HERE WE GO AGAIN.

WOOOOOOSH

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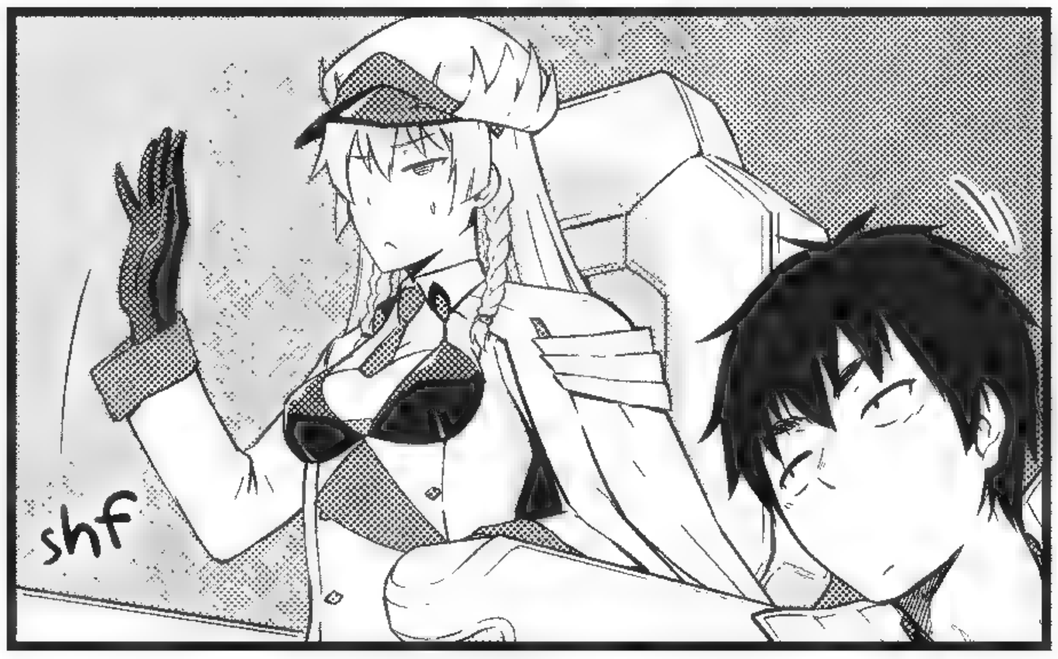
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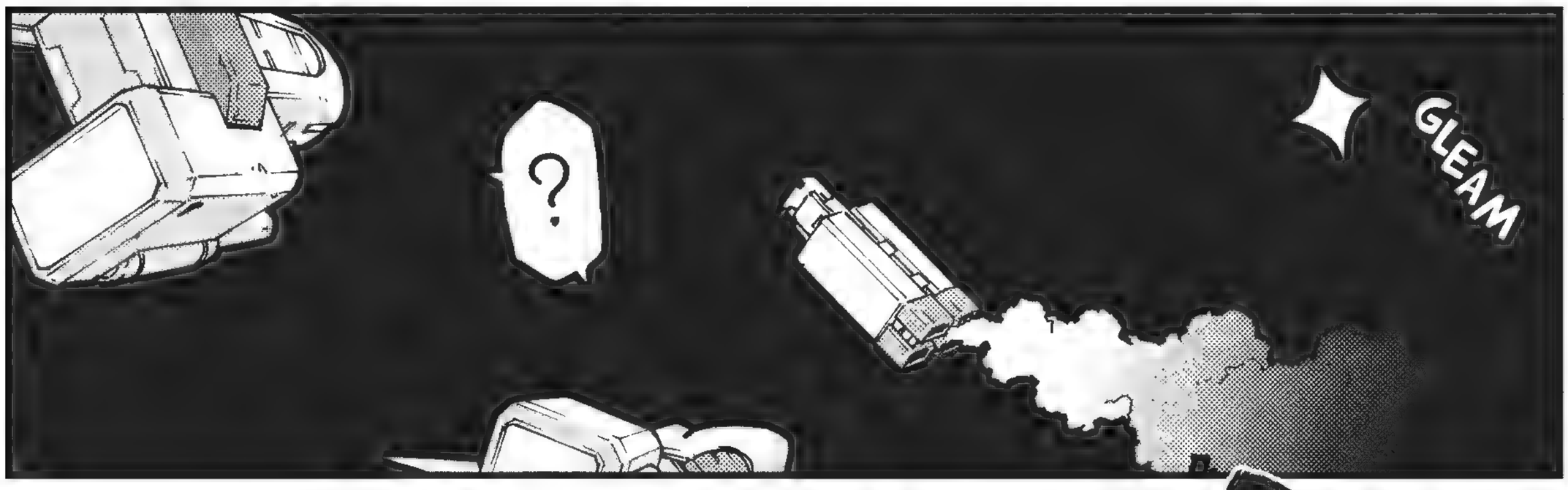
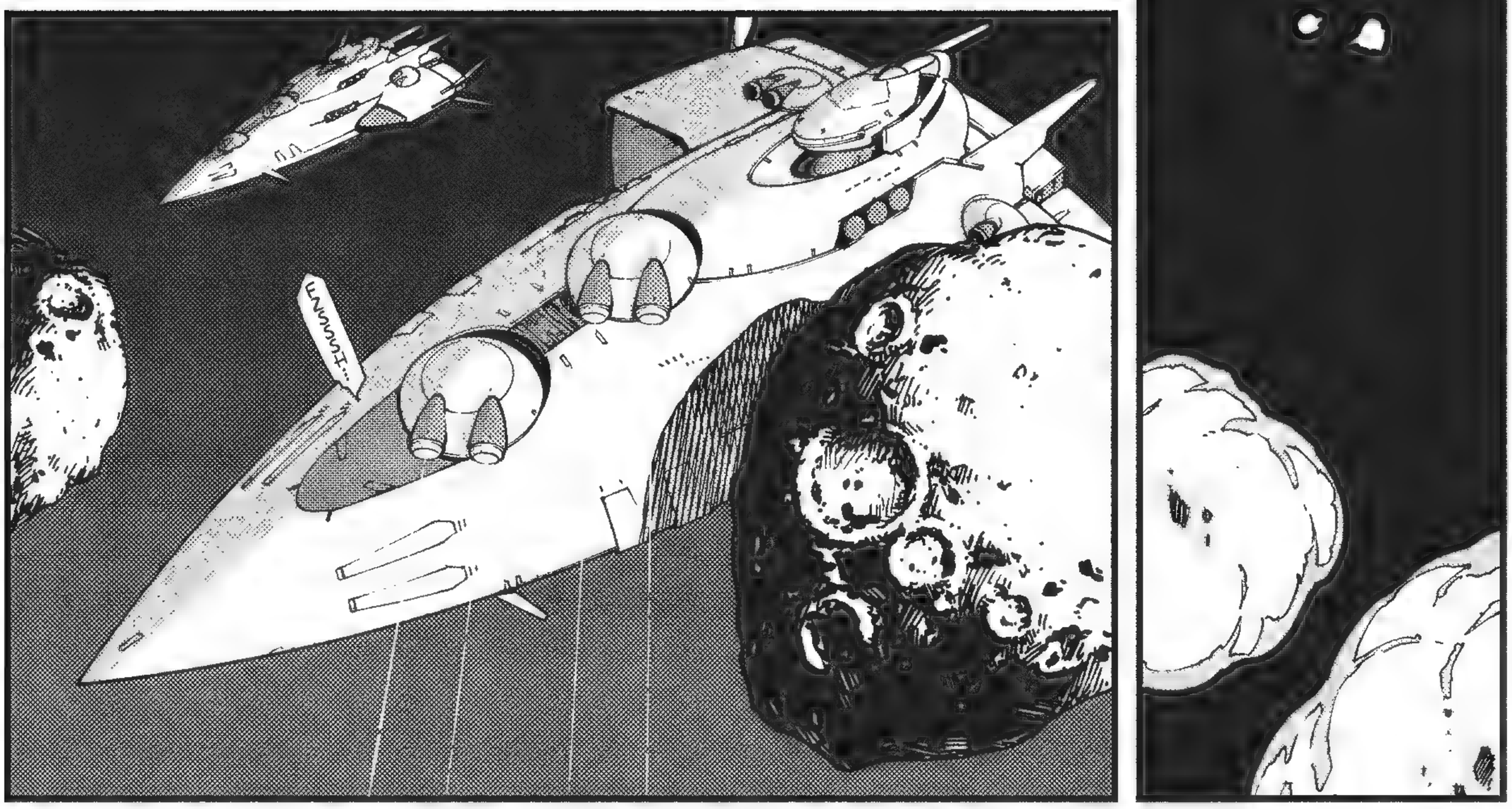
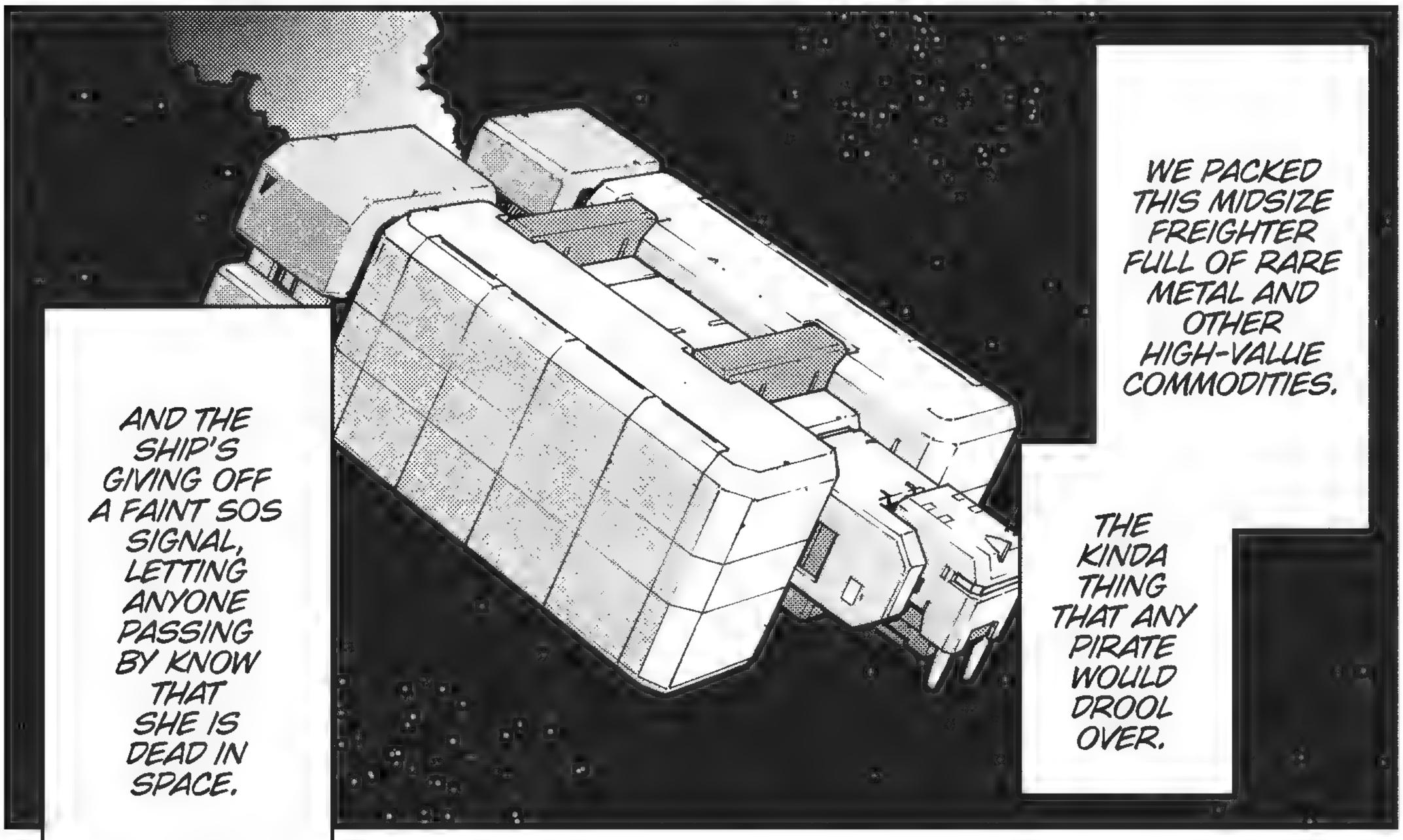

?
GLEAM

BOOM


UNNNNH...

YOU KNOW, THIS IS REALLY...
Sigh...
MAN, GOTTA LOVE BATTLESHIP WEAPONRY! THE RANGE AND POWER ARE INSANE!


AND THE SHIP'S GIVING OFF A FAINT SOS SIGNAL, LETTING ANYONE PASSING BY KNOW THAT SHE IS DEAD IN SPACE.
WE PACKED THIS MIDSIZE FREIGHTER FULL OF RARE METAL AND OTHER HIGH-VALUE COMMODITIES.
THE KINDA THING THAT ANY PIRATE WOULD DROOL OVER.

I HAD LT. COMMANDER SERENA BUY IT.

CUZ OF COURSE THE MARQUESS'S DAUGHTER HAS FIVE MILLION ENER LYING AROUND.

AS YOU'VE ALREADY GUESSED, IT'S A TRAP.

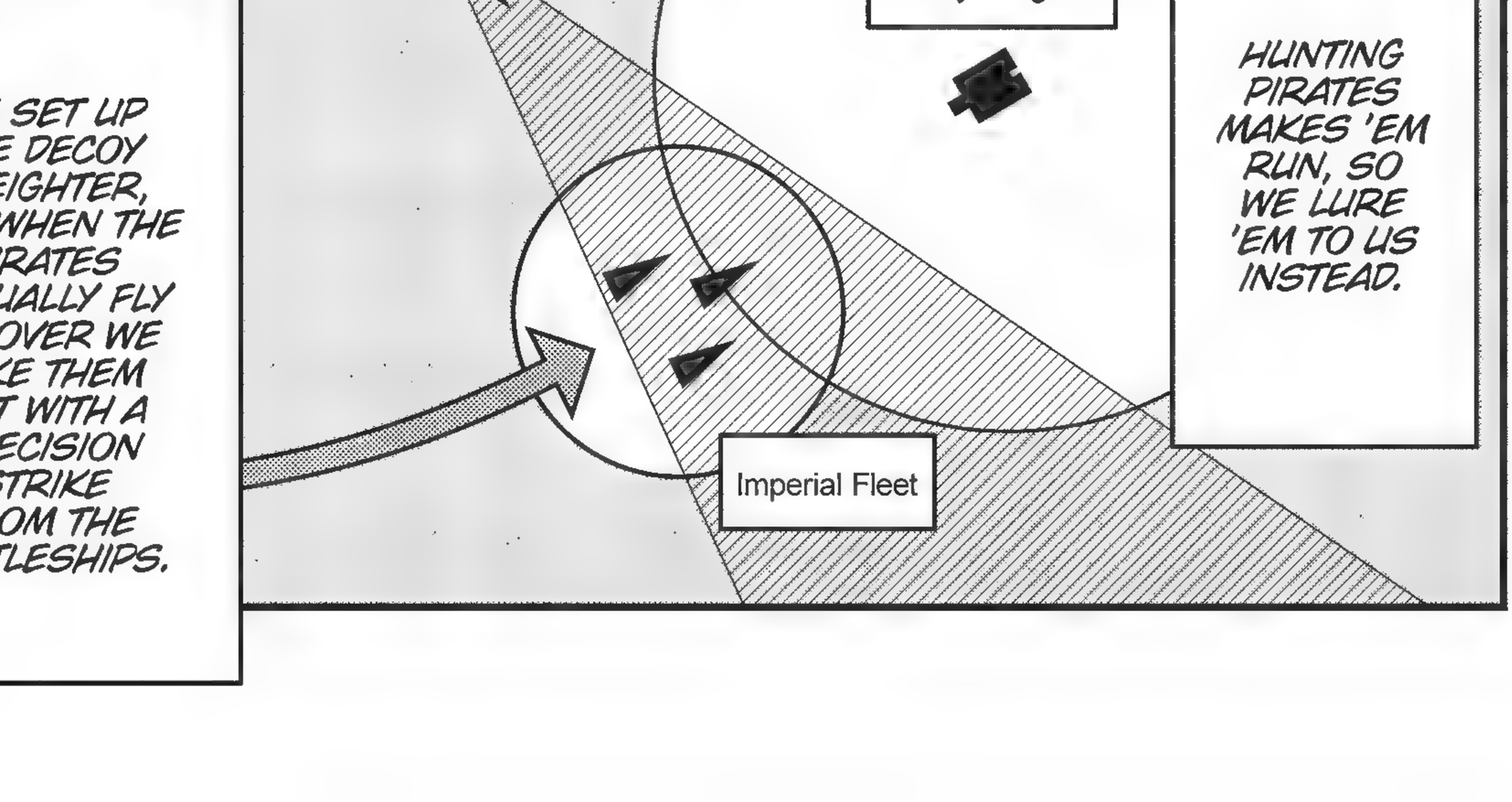
THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS FAIR PLAY WHEN DEALING WITH PIRATES.

THE PLAN IS SIMPLE.

ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS SNEAK ATTACK STRATEGY?

As a noble, this chafes my pride...

WE SET UP THE DECOY FREIGHTER, AND WHEN THE PIRATES CASUALLY FLY ON OVER WE TAKE THEM OUT WITH A PRECISION STRIKE FROM THE BATTLESHIPS.




HUNTING PIRATES MAKES 'EM RUN, SO WE LURE 'EM TO US INSTEAD.

SMIRK

SMIRK

IT'S A GOLD MINE WITH ZERO PERSONAL COST!!

OH, AND FOR THIS OPERATION...

I GET TWENTY PERCENT OF THE BOUNTY FROM THE PIRATES.

OF COURSE, THEY'LL GET SUSPICIOUS IF WE STAY IN ONE SPOT FOR TOO LONG, SO WE KEEP MOVING.

More hits on the radar!!

.....

WE CAN USE THIS STRATEGY TO GATHER INTEL ON THE PIRATES.

THEN WE CAN GO AND DESTROY THEIR BASES ONE AFTER ANOTHER. THE RESULTS WILL SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.

YOU NOTICED?

YOU SEEM... HAPPY, CAPTAIN.

HOW-EVER...

INDEED.

WE'LL HAVE TO SWITCH TACTICS AND BAIT GOODS OCCASIONALLY, THOUGH.

It's a battle of wits.

I STILL HAVE FURTHER USE OF YOU.

YOUR CONTRACT PERIOD ISN'T EVEN HALFWAY OVER!

AYE, AYE, MA'AM.

.....

smile

smile

worn

out...

WELL THEN, SHALL WE?

UHH... SHALL WE WHAT?

TODAY IS MY DAY OFF.

UH-HUH.

I HAD PLANNED TO GO INTO TOWN FOR A MEAL.

MHM, ISN'T THAT NICE?

NO THANKS.

SO, WON'T YOU JOIN ME?

THIS IS PART OF YOUR WORK.

DID THIS NOBLE GIRL SERIOUSLY JUST TISK AT ME?

Tsk!

SOUNDS LIKE AN ABUSE OF AUTHORITY TO ME.

I AM SIMPLY SUGGESTING THAT WE DISCUSS YOUR FUTURE LECTURES OVER A MEAL.

Sigh...

I HAVE NEVER BEEN REPROACHED FOR SOMETHING SUCH AS THIS.

You worry too much.

.....

I GUESS IF I HAVE TO...

GLOW

EXCEL-LENT!!

.....

A DATE? I THOUGHT THIS WAS FOR WORK?

DO YOU USUALLY BRING OTHER WOMEN WITH YOU ON A DATE?

?

ELMA HAS MUCH MORE THAN EXPERIENCE THAN ME. SHE'S A WAY BETTER FIT FOR THIS POSITION.

HRM... AS YOU WISH.

SMILE

AND MIMI, WHERE DID YOU FIND SUCH A CUTE OUTFIT? I SIMPLY MUST KNOW!

ELMA, THAT TRADITIONAL ELVEN OUTFIT IS SO LOVELY!

ER, THANK YOU.

You're too kind...

WHY, THANK YOU!

I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU OUT OF UNIFORM. YOUR CASUAL CLOTHES ARE VERY FETCHING.

.....

SHALL WE GET GOING?

I REALLY HOPE NOTHING HAPPENS...

なぁ！
そのくるま！

IKEAの
お客さんしか…

whisper

whisper

I really appreciate it. You seem way happier than I expected, too.

Don't mention it. Not like I could say no.

Sorry to make you come along.

AND I'M NOT THE ONE YOU SHOULD BE WORRIED ABOUT...

?

I DON'T NEED TO MAKE HER IMPRESSION OF US EVEN WORSE.

URK...

YOU SERIOUSLY THINK THIS IS A REAL SMILE?

Chapter 17

YOU NEED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT HER MOOD QUICKLY.

GLOOOOM

CAPTAIN HIRO.

YEAH?

UHH... MIMI?

I MEAN, SHE PROMISED TO ONLY TALK ABOUT WORK TODAY, SO...

BESIDES, WE'VE GOT THE MARQUESS'S DAUGHTER TAKING US OUT, RIGHT?

PLEASE DON'T LET YOUR GUARD DOWN AROUND HER. YOU REALLY NEED TO BE CAREFUL.

OH?

You said you wanted to be the top gourmand of the galaxy...

IF YOU WANNA EAT RARE FOODS, THIS IS YOUR CHANCE.

BIP

THE RESTAURANT WE'RE GOING TO IS QUITE HIGHLY RATED.

NOT ONLY THAT...

MIMI, DO YOU LIKE TRYING ALL SORTS OF FOODS?

YOU CERTAINLY WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED.

THEY SPECIALIZE IN ORGANIC CUISINE.

TWITCH

ORGAN-IC?

SO, NOT FOOD CARTRIDGES-- ACTUAL VEGGIES AND MEAT?

THAT DOES SOUND PRETTY INTER... ESTING?

ORGANIC...

?

?

BEAAAAM

CAPTAIN! AN ORGANIC FOOD RESTAURANT! ORGANIC!!

FWIP

FWIP

Y- YEAH...

I'VE NEVER EATEN FRESH FRUITS OR VEGETABLES BEFORE!

I WONDER WHAT THEY TASTE LIKE... HOW WILL THEY COMPARE TO THE ARTIFICIAL VERSIONS?

SKREEK

I GUESS ORGANIC STUFF IS PRETTY RARE.

I'M GLAD TO SEE MIMI SMILING AGAIN.

I BOOKED A PRIVATE TABLE FOR US, SO THERE IS NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT KEEPING UP APPEARANCES.

Forget all the formality.

A PRIVATE TABLE, HUH...

DON'T WORRY!

I'M GETTING RATHER NERVOUS.

I WOULD'VE BEEN COMPLETELY ALONE WITH SERENA...

?

MIMI IS RIGHT...

GOTTA FOCUS AND MAKE SURE I DON'T WALK INTO ANY TRAPS...

I REALLY DO NEED TO BE CAREFUL.

SLAAAAM!

BAM!

I'M TRYIN' MY BESHT!

THAY JUSS DOHN GEDDIT!

...

GULP

GULP

PAAAAAAHHH!

SHI K!

hick

WIF DEM ISH ALWAYSH ONE FING OR ANUTHA...

LOOKIN' DOWN ON ME JUSH CUZ I'M A WOMAN...

HUH? OH, UH, YEAH...

Shwip

KNOW WHAT I MEAN?!!

SO...

SHE'S A COMPLETE MESS...!

NOM

WHEN SHE'S NOT AT WORK...

THE ORGANIC FOOD WAS ABSOLUTELY DELICIOUS.

THINGS STARTED OUT WELL ENOUGH.

WE WERE CHATTING UP A STORM, AND WITH SUCH GOOD FOOD, ALL WAS PEACEFUL.

AS SOON AS SERENA GOT SOME WINE IN HER, SHE CHANGED...

BUT...

ALL OF A SUDDEN, SHE WAS DRINKING NONSTOP...

tump

AND HERE WE ARE.

FORCIN' MYSHELF TO SMILE...

ALWAYSH APOLOGIZIN' FOR THINGS THAT AIN'T MY FAULT...

AND EVEN THEN...

SHING!

I'M GONNA CHOP 'EM ALL UP, I SWEAR!!

YA KNOW WAT THEY DO?!

THEY JUST STARE AT MY BOOBS!

?

THANK GOD WE HAVE A PRIVATE TABLE.

And put the sword away...

WHOA, WHOA! LET'S CALM DOWN.

BUT YOU JUST DON'T BUDGE!!

I'VE BEEN TRYING SO HARD TO GET YOU ON MY SIDE...

CLINK

YOU'RE NO BETTER.

.....

HUH?

WELL, I...

NOOOO!

!! CNSH

I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT!!

I'm just about done with her.

THEN WHY BRING IT UP...?

I'M NOT AN IDJIT...

?

I KNOW I'M ASHKIN' A LOT...

SO, YOU *ARE* AWARE.

I ALREADY TOLD YOU, QUIT TRYING TO RECRUIT ME FOR THE MILITARY.

Don't wanna join, not gonna join.

YOU...

IF YOU WANNA OFFER ME JOBS, I CAN DO THEM, SO...

THAT SAID, WE'RE CLOSE ENOUGH TO BREAK BREAD TOGETHER.

WON'T ABANDON ME, RIGHT?

...

NICE TRY.

SH-SHE JUST MEANS THAT YOU'RE SO KIND, CAPTAIN!

staaaare...

IF YOU'D FALLEN FOR THAT, I WOULD'VE CLOCKED YOU.

SERIOUSLY? NO FAITH WHATSO-EVER?

THAT'S NOT HOW THIS WORKS.

Tch!

NOT FAIR...

SLAM!

I SAW YOU FIIIIRST!!

ISH NOT FAIR! ISH NOT FAIRRRR!

WHAT'S NOT FAIR...?

WAAAAAAAAH!!

YOU... YOU WHAT?

WHEN...

WHEN YOU FIRST ARRIVED AT THE PORT AUTHORITY, I WAS THE ONE WHO SAVED YOU.

I GOT TO YOU FIRST...

I LOOKED AWAY FOR ONE SECOND...

AND I...

SHFF

WHA... SHACKED UP...? WHERE THE HECK ARE YOU GOING WITH THIS?

AND YOU'D ALREADY SHACKED UP WITH OTHER GIRLS.

H-
HEY...

GLUG

TONK!

tunk

ARE
YOU...

UHH...

HNNOOO

OKAY?

DO I LOOK LIKE I HAVE A DEATH WISH?!

That's the Marquess's daughter!

ERM...

RIRIRING

MIGHT AS WELL ADD HER TO YOUR COLLECTION.

JEEZ, NOW WHAT?

.....

DO WE WANT MORE TIME, OR...?

A PRIVATE TABLE AT A PLACE LIKE THIS AIN'T CHEAP.

OUR RESERVED TIME IS ALMOST UP.

Sigh.

HNNOOOOCCCH...

LET'S GET GOING.

WELL...

hah...

gulp

gulp

:O

Just a bit further!

Why am I stuck with her...

Thanks.

I'M GUESSING THEY TOSSED HER IN THE MEDICAL POD.

WE CARRIED A VERY DRUNK SERENA BACK TO KRISHNA, AND I LEFT HER IN THE CARE OF MIMI AND ELMA.

IS SHE JUST ALWAYS THAT STRESSED OUT?

AND SHE DOESN'T SEEM LIKE A LIGHTWEIGHT, EITHER.

THAT WAS SOME PRETTY EMBARRASSING BEHAVIOR FOR A NOBLEWOMAN.

She's wasted.

THAT WAS A PRETTY WEIRD THING TO SAY...

and you'd already shacked up with other girls.

HEY.

PSSSHT

I SHOULD PROBABLY JUST FORGET ABOUT IT.

Best for both of us.

swish

THE PRINCESS HAS AWAKENED.

THE MEDICAL POD GOT THE ALCOHOL OUT OF HER SYSTEM.

THAT POD'S KINDA INSANE.

HUH, THAT WAS FAST.

I AM SO VERY SORRY FOR MY BEHAVIOR...

WELL, EVERYONE NEEDS TO BLOW OFF STEAM SOMETIMES.

ABOUT THOSE THINGS I SAID...

NO, YOU'VE HELPED ME ENOUGH. I'M FINE.

HOW ARE YOU FEELING? SHOULD WE WALK YOU BACK TO YOUR SHIP?

WE ALL GOT TO TRY SOME PRETTY RARE FOOD THANKS TO YOU, SO DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT!

EVERYTHING ELSE IS FORGIVEN AND FORGOTTEN. THAT FINE BY YOU?

I GOTCHA COVERED. WE HAD A FUN LITTLE DINNER PARTY, AND THAT'S IT.

?

N-
NEVER
MIND!
IT'S
NOTHING!

VWSH

fwip

fwip

?

EVERY-
THING...?

?

ELMA...

?

HUH?
WAIT A
SEC...

NOW THEN,
I MUST BE
GOING!
PLEASE
EXCUSE
ME!

WOOSH

WOMEN
IN THE
MILITARY
SURE
HAVE IT
ROUGH,
DON'T
THEY?

NO BITES YET.

I EXPECTED AS MUCH.

IS WHAT I'D LIKE TO SAY, BUT NOPE.

THE PIRATE-HUNTING OPERATION CONTINUED WITHOUT A HITCH...

WHEN THEY START HEARING ABOUT OTHER PIRATES GETTING TAKEN OUT IN A SITUATION JUST LIKE THIS, THEY'LL BE ON GUARD, OF COURSE.

THE PIRATES AREN'T IDIOTS.

WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

SO, WE HAVEN'T GOTTEN ANY FRESH MEAT THIS WEEK.

ALL RIGHT.

INDEED. WE'VE TAKEN OUT OVER TWO HUNDRED PIRATE SHIPS.

IT WOULD BE BEST TO ATTACK WHILE THEIR NUMBERS ARE DOWN.

MAYBE IT'S TIME TO PULL THEM OUT BY THE ROOTS.

LET US PROCEED...

WITH DESTROYING THE PIRATE BASE IN THIS SECTOR.

I THINK A SIEGE-STYLE METHOD SIMILAR TO THE PREVIOUS OPERATION WOULD BE IDEAL. HOW-EVER...

SOUNDS GOOD.

HOW SHOULD WE GO ABOUT IT?

WE HAVE THE LOCATION FROM THE DATA CACHES WE RETRIEVED.

GOT PLENTY OF LARGE SHIPS, BUT NOWHERE NEAR ENOUGH FAST ONES, LIKE THE CORVETTES...

WE CAN MAKE UP FOR THAT WITH MERCEN-ARIES.

GETTING REINFORCEMENTS FROM THE IMPERIAL FLEET WILL NOT BE EASY. ALL WE WILL HAVE IN TERMS OF SHIPS ARE THE ONES COMPOSING OUR PIRATE-HUNTING UNIT.

LET'S SUBMIT A REQUEST TO THE GUILD.

*GLAD TO SEE SHE'S GUNNING FOR SUCCESS INSTEAD OF LOOKING FOR ACCOLADES.*

*A SMART SOLDIER KNOWS WHEN THEY NEED REINFORCE-MENTS.*

AND I EXPECT YOU TO TAKE PART IN THIS OPERATION, OF COURSE.

I'M A MERCENARY, NOT A CHARITY.

DEPENDS ON THE TERMS.

SERVICES NOT COVERED BY MY CON-TRACT ARE BILLED SEPARATELY, YA KNOW?

ALWAYS THINKING AHEAD, I SEE... J

CRIK CRAK

ALLLL RIGHTY, LET'S GIVE 'EM A SHOW.

WE'LL BE ARRIVING SHORTLY.

AS FAR AS MILITARY STUFF GOES, ANYWAY.

HA HA HA...

BEEN A WHILE SINCE WE HAD AN ACTUAL BATTLE.

YEAH, I WONDER HOW SERENA'LL FARE.

I'M SURE SHE'LL BE FINE. SHE'S SMART.

LEAVING FTL TRAVEL IN FIVE, FOUR, THREE, TWO, ONE...

*THE MERCENARY SQUADS ARE MOVING TO THE TARGET VIA FTL DRIVE...*

ゴゴゴ WOOOO

*THIS OPERATION IS PRETTY MUCH A REPEAT OF THE LAST ONE.*

IT'S STARTING!

fzssssh

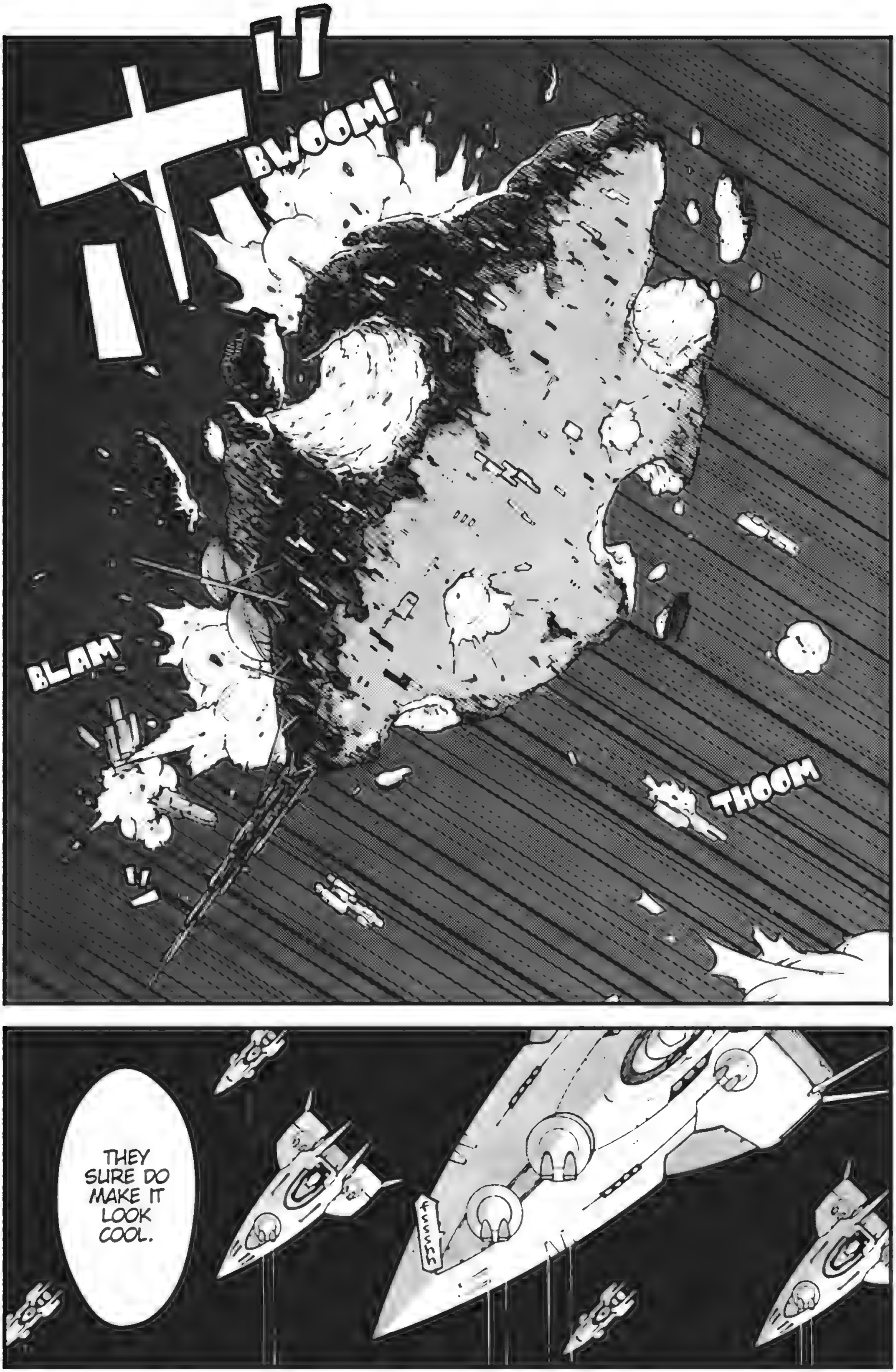
AND AS WE REENTER NORMAL SPACE...

tZOOOM!

pop

pop

pop


BWOOM!
BLAM
THOOM
THEY SURE DO MAKE IT LOOK COOL.
FWWSH

WE DEFINITELY TOOK THEM BY SURPRISE SINCE WE HAVEN'T ENCOUNTERED ANY SHIPS YET.

THEY BETTER HAVE LEFT SOME FOR US...

THIS IS WHERE WE MAKE THE BIG BUCKS.

MULTIPLE HITS ON THE RADAR! PIRATE SHIPS ARE SPREADING OUT!

NO NEED TO WORRY, EH?

Shoom

Shoom

SWITCHING ENGINES TO BATTLE MODE. WEAPON SYSTEMS ONLINE!

NO EMPTY NETS ON THIS RUN!

HELL YEAH!

WOOO!

LET'S GET IN THERE!!

BUP
BUP
BUP
THREE OF THEM!!
DUN
PIRATES AT TEN O'CLOCK!
WOOSH
WOOSH
WOOSH
BUT...
NOT A BAD IDEA.
THEY WANNA TAKE US OUT AND MAKE A BREAK FOR IT, HUH...?

Chapter 18

WHOOOSH!

YOU PICKED THE WORST GUY TO TRY IT ON!

TYOOM!

DZING

P-STUN

BRACE YOUR-SELVES!

SHIELDING ON A PIRATE SHIP? NOW I'VE SEEN IT ALL.

OKAY...

VWEEE

KSSSHH

THRRRR

HNGH!

AH!

MMM

EVEN KRISHNA'S *INERTIAL DAMPENING* CAN ONLY DO SO MUCH...

?!

BWOOOSH!

?!

WATCH OUT BEHIND YOU!

WHOOOSH!

SK-SH

SK-SH

KA-CHAK

NOT SO FAST!!

BOOM!

BLAM!

THOOM!

GA-CHUNK

THOOM!

BA-BOOM!

GRAKAK

GUESS SO.

STILL GOT THE TOUCH, HUH?

MORE ENEMIES DETECTED!

THERE'S SIX...NO, SEVEN!

INCLUDING TWO MID-SIZE SHIPS IN THE CENTER!!

LOOKS LIKE FREIGHTERS UPGRADED FOR MISSILE SUPPORT.

YOU KNOW IT!

STILL GOING IN?

ELMA, YOU'RE ON ANTI-MISSILE DUTY.

GOT IT.

d.
2
2
R
R
R

LET'S START WITH THE FREIGHTERS!

FSHT

KSHKSH

KSH

POP

POP

POP

POP

DEPLOYING FLARES!!

MULTIPLE HEAT SIGNATURES DETECTED NEAR THE FREIGHTERS! HEAT-SEEKING MISSILES!

boof

shoom

oomf

!! THOOM!

TOO SLOW!

!! BOOM

BLAM

NICE TRY.

NOT GONNA LET MY BOUNTY JUST RUN AWAY!

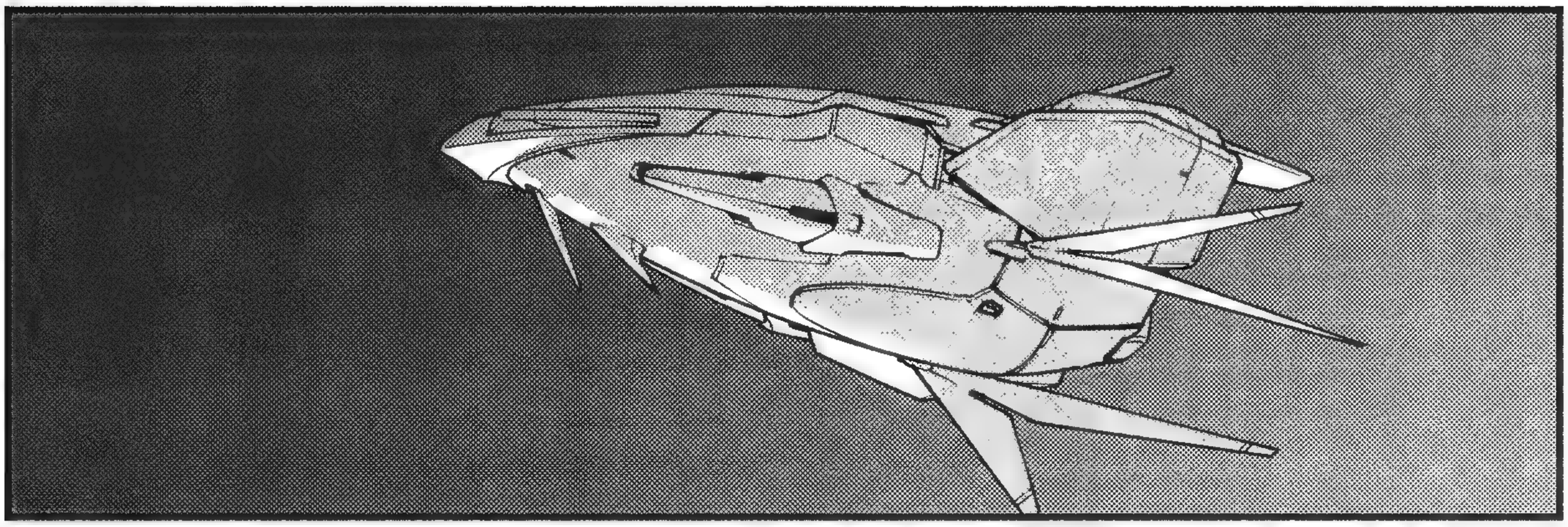
THE REMAINING SHIPS ARE DISPERSING.

IS THAT THEIR VERY EXISTENCE CAUSES HARM.

THE THING ABOUT PIRATES...

JUSTICE HAS NEVER TASTED SO SWEET!

SO, I'M BASICALLY GETTING PAID TO CLEAN UP SPACE.



Sending you the data now.
THE CLOSEST BATTLE IS TOWARD YOUR TEN O'CLOCK.
NO ADDITIONAL PIRATES DETECTED! THIS AREA IS ALL CLEAR!

OKAY, HEAD FOR THOSE EXPLOSIONS.

THERE'S STILL MONEY TO BE MADE!

THE SURPRISE ATTACK WAS A SUCCESS. WE'VE MET MINIMAL RESISTANCE FROM THE PIRATES.

HOW ARE WE LOOKING?

TAKING OUT THEIR MAIN HANGAR BAY WITH THE FIRST BARRAGE WAS QUITE THE BOON FOR US.

YES, AS A RESULT, THE MERCENARIES HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CONTAIN THE REMAINING PIRATES.

THE BATTLE SEEMS TO BE OURS.

I SEE.

I GUESS A SURPRISE ATTACK FROM AN INDEPENDENT FLEET DIDN'T EVEN CROSS THEIR MINDS.

I ASSUMED THE PIRATES WOULD BE ON HIGH ALERT GIVEN THE DECOY OPERATIONS AND FLEET MOVEMENTS, BUT THIS HAS GONE SURPRISINGLY WELL.

MOVING FORWARD, ALL SHIPS MAY ACT AT THEIR DISCRETION.

YES, MA'AM.

YES, MA'AM.

SEND ME THE MERCENARIES' INDIVIDUAL DATA.

INCLUDING THEIR KILL COUNTS.

AND...

Ship Kill Counts

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean laoreet ante eget ullamcorper lacinia.
Curabitur rutrum augue malesuada augue iaculis sect

Hermod
Capt. Woden Magni
Kagutsuchi
Capt. Akiha Kanda
Krishna
Capt. Hiro
Achileus
Capt. Zeno Troja
Vermilion Bird
Capt.
Anubis
Capt.
Orpheus
Capt.

BZRT

Woden Magni

Kagutsuchi
apt. Akiha Kanda

Krishna
Capt. Hiro

Achileus
Zeno Troja

SWIP!

W-WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF AN OPERATION!!

WHAT ARE YOU ALL GAWKING AT?!

THUD

WHUMPH

sqsh

sqsh

BWOOM!

THE BATTLE CLOSEST TO THE PIRATE BASE APPEARS TO BE ONGOING, HOWEVER.

IT'S PRETTY FAR. BASED ON THIS DATA, I BET IT'D BE OVER BY THE TIME WE GET THERE.

AND THAT'S THAT.

AREA CLEAR. NO ADDITIONAL PIRATES DETECTED.

THAT'S ALL, *HUH...?*

WHICH MEANS WE'RE ALL DONE.

WHAT'S OUR SCORE?

*ERR,* THIRTY-THREE SMALL, AND THREE MID-SIZE SHIPS.

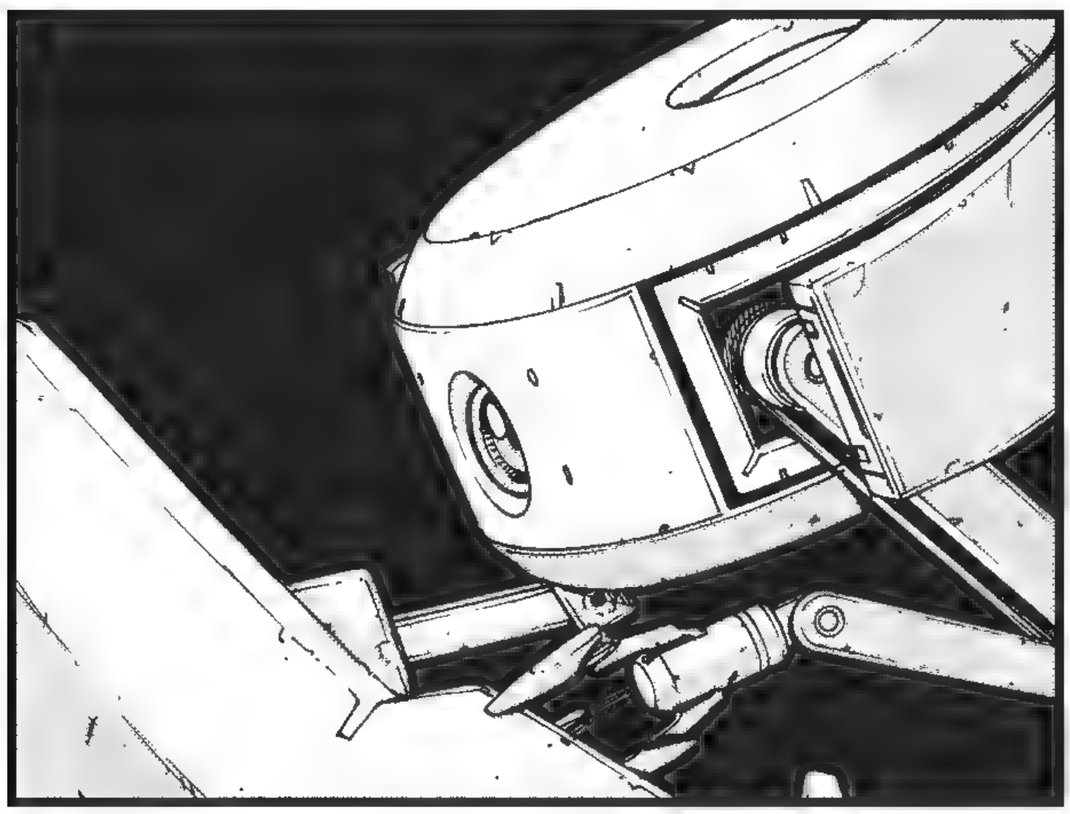
NOWHERE NEAR THE HAUL FROM THE TARMEIN BATTLE.

STILL, IT'S A FANTASTIC RESULT.

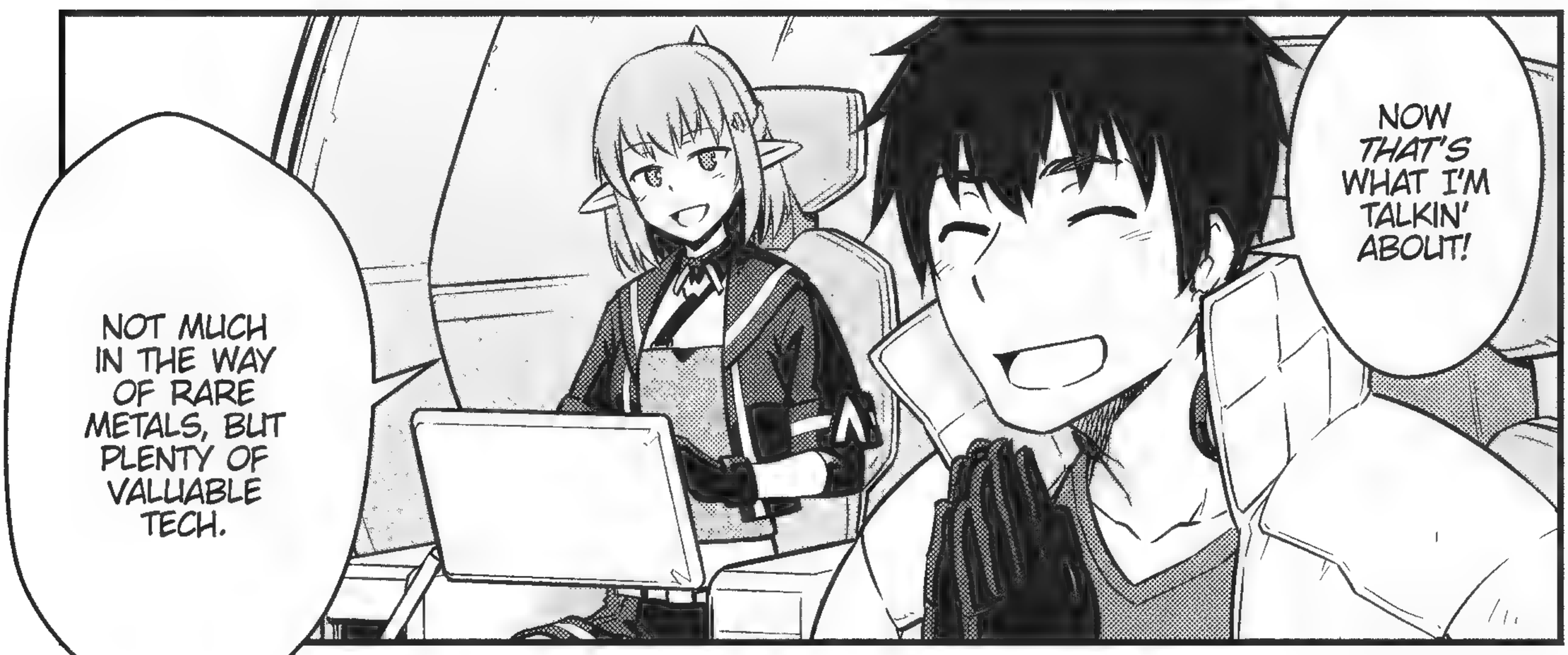
SINCE THE FLEET'S PREEMPTIVE STRIKE WAS SO SUCCESSFUL, THERE WEREN'T MANY LEFT FOR US.

TIME TO PUT IN A BIT OF EFFORT AND MAKE UP FOR IT. BEGIN SALVAGE OPERATIONS.

SO, WE SHOULDN'T EXPECT MUCH REWARD MONEY...



ｱﾚｰ？
ﾅﾆｶｶﾞｷｴﾀﾖｳﾅ…？
ﾋｨｯ


NOW THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKIN' ABOUT!
NOT MUCH IN THE WAY OF RARE METALS, BUT PLENTY OF VALUABLE TECH.

WE'VE RECEIVED NOTICE THAT THE OPERATION IS OVER, SO WE MAY WITHDRAW.

BUT AS FOR THE BATTLE ITSELF...

MIMI, HOW'S THE BATTLE GOING?

AH, STILL WORKING ON THE BASE TAKEOVER, *HUH?*

BOOM

WITH THE IMPERIAL ARMY'S POWER ARMOR AND HEAVY WEAPONRY...

THE REMAINING PIRATES ARE DONE FOR.

BRAP

BRAP

BRAP

BRAP

BRAP

THEY'RE PROBABLY CLEARING OUT THE LAST OF THE PIRATES.

SHALL WE HEAD BACK TO THE COLONY THEN?

IN ANY CASE, OUR ROLE IN THIS DRAMA IS WRAPPED.

YEAH.

START CHARGING THE FTL DRIVE.

YES, CAPTAIN!

SIGH...

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO AFTER THIS JOB FOR SERENA IS DONE?

GUESS IT'S BACK TO BABYSITTING THE PRINCESS...

JUST GOTTA ENDURE ONE MORE WEEK. IT'LL BE OVER BEFORE YOU KNOW IT.

WITH *KRISHNA* AND YOUR SKILLS, YOU'D BE ROLLING IN DOUGH.

*MMM*, THAT WHOLE CONFLICT THING DOESN'T SOUND LIKE MY BAG.

IF YOU WANNA MAKE SOME REAL MONEY, HOW ABOUT HEADING FOR THE CONFLICT SECTOR?

*IF YOU WEREN'T REPAIRING OR RE-SUPPLYING, THERE WASN'T MUCH LEFT.*

*BACK WHEN I PLAYED SOL, MARTIAL LAW WOULD BE IMPOSED ON COLONIES DURING TIMES OF CONFLICT, SEVERELY RESTRICTING WHAT YOU COULD DO.*

THERE'S BEEN AN INCREASE IN ATTACKS ON PASSENGER SHIPS NEAR THIS TOURIST PLANET.

*I'M GUESSING IT'S PROBABLY SIMILAR IN THIS UNIVERSE.*

I'M NOT EXACTLY IN A RUSH TO BUY A DETACHED HOUSE, BUT A LITTLE DETOUR CAN'T HURT.

DOESN'T A LITTLE VACATION WITH SOME PIRATE-HUNTING ON THE SIDE SOUND FUN?

A TOURIST PLANET, HUH...?

POWERING DOWN THE FTL DRIVE.

'KAY, SEND THE DOCKING REQ--

HUH?

WE'VE ARRIVED AT THE COLONY.

IS IT JUST ME, OR IS SOMETHING OFF ABOUT THE COLONY?

YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT...

LOOKS LIKE THERE'S A BLACKOUT IN THAT DISTRICT.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

DUNNO WHY YOU'RE ASKING ME...

AND THERE ARE MANY SHIPS LEAVING THE MAIN HANGAR.

*WHAT COULD BE GOING ON?*

OH, NEVER MI--

BUT THEY JUST WON'T RESPOND.

BEEP

I'VE BEEN TRYING TO HAIL THE PORT AUTHORITY...

HI FLASH

dzRt

This is the Port Authority!

Apologies, but we're a bit busy right now!!

bzzz

.....

You're a merc?! So you've got combat power armor aboard?!

HUH? YEAH, I DO. WHY...?

I'M CAPTAIN HIRO WITH THE MERCENARY GUILD. WHAT'S GOING ON?

THEY DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT'S ATTACKING THEM?

You gotta help us! The colony's under attack! Unknown forces!

WE ALWAYS ARE.

You're seriously looking for a payday at a time like this?!

WE'RE MERCENARIES, BUDDY. WE DON'T WORK FOR FREE.

Sigh.

Every-thing's a mess right now. We don't even have enough info for that!

BZZZ

TRNG

YOU HAVEN'T SUBMITTED A WORK ORDER TO THE GUILD YET?

Will do. Give me a second...

JUST FIND ME A DOCKING BAY.

YOU SURE YOU WANNA GET INVOLVED WITH THIS?

ELMA, YOU'RE IN CHARGE.

BESIDES, IF THE AREIN COLONY GETS DESTROYED, WE CAN'T CLAIM OUR BOUNTY.

KSSHT

DEFENDING THE PORT WHILE MAKING A BIT OF COIN AIN'T A BAD DEAL.

POWER ARMOR, HUH?

I WASN'T EXPECTING ANY HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT.

KSSHT

HAVEN'T USED THIS STUFF SINCE I GOT HERE...

CLAK

KLUNK

KLUNK

GA-CHUNK

shff

HERE WE GO.

FLASH

DUNNO WHO'S ATTACKING OR WHAT THEY'RE AFTER...TALK ABOUT A CRAZY MISSION.

BIP

BIP

PUSH

SOMETHING THAT REQUIRES COMBAT POWER ARMOR, NO LESS...

*CAN'T SAY I EVER DID SOMETHING LIKE THIS BACK IN SOL.*

VSSHT

VSSHT

Captain, I'm opening the cargo bay door!

KSSSHT

ALL RIGHTY THEN.

CLANG

TIME FOR ANOTHER QUICK JOB!!

THWUMP!

SKRREEEEE!

T-THWOKKK

!!

slcch...

GA-SLAM!!

GRIN...

Chapter 19

BA HA HA HA HA HA!!

GLRSH!

NOW *THIS* IS POWER !!!

YUP, NO PROBLEM.

BWIP

Captain, are you okay?

SHNK

THESE UNKNOWN FORCES...

THAT SAID...

PLOP...

WITH POWER ARMOR, THESE THINGS ARE A PIECE OF CAKE.

GRRULLL...

ARE THEY WHAT I THINK THEY ARE?

LOOKS EXACTLY LIKE WHAT WE SAW AT THE CULTIVATED MEAT PLANT.

ZLRRCH

PROBABLY, YEAH...

HMM...

WHO KNOWS? I THOUGHT THEY COULDN'T SURVIVE OUTSIDE THE FACTORY, SO...

THAT'S WHAT THEY SAID, AT LEAST.

WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED?

BUT THE BIG ONES HAVE ARMS AND LEGS...

SQCH

SQCH

THE LITTLE GUYS LOOK PRETTY SIMILAR TO THE ONES WE SAW BEFORE.

SPLAT!

WHAT THE HECK'S GOING ON HERE...?

WHAT'S WITH ALL THE MARTIAL ARTS?

KRUNCH!

HEY...

ARE YOU GOOD AT HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT?

THAT THING'S EQUIPPED WITH A PRETTY POWERFUL LASER LAUNCHER...

NOT EVERY DAY THAT I GET TO USE POWER ARMOR.

BLIT I WANNA GIVE IT A TRY WHILE I HAVE THE CHANCE.

NOPE, NOT AT ALL.

BUT IN SOL, THE MAIN USE FOR THIS ARMOR WAS CLOSE-QUARTERS COMBAT.

THERE'RE ACTUALLY DIFFERENT TYPES OF POWER ARMOR.

SK

MOBILITY AND AGILITY, MAYBE?

AS LONG AS YOU'RE FASTER THAN MOST PEOPLE, YOU'LL BE FINE.

R

EEEEEEE

IN THAT KIND OF SITUATION, WHAT YOU NEED ARE...

SLAM!

BUT WHAT'S REALLY IMPOR-TANT...

IS TOUGH ARMOR...

GRRRCH

RIP

RIP

SKRRCH

CLERCH!

AND RAW POWER!!

MY POWER ARMOR'S MODEL NUMBER IS...

TMPS-13 RIKISHI MK. III.

SHWIP

SPLAT

ナ!!

ナ!! VWSH!

ZWLCH!

ナ SQUISH

ITS BUILT-IN WEAPONRY INCLUDES...

GRRRRUUUULL...

CRUMBLE...

GZRT!

GZRT!

GZRT!

GZRT!

DZRT!

ULTRA-HIGH VOLTAGE CURRENT EMITTERS IN BOTH HANDS...

AKA "HARITE.*"

DZRT!

*In sumo, a palm thrust.

SPLATCH!

WHAM!

GLRRRCH

VRRRRRRRRNNN

!!
WHAM!

"SHIKO.*"

AND IN THE LEGS, A SET OF IMPACT MAGNIFI-ERS...

*A leg-raising stretch and stomp exercise in sumo.

WEEEEM

THE SHOULDERS HAVE HIGH-OUTPUT LASER CANNONS CALLED...

WEEEEM

SKRRX

EEEEE

SQUILCCCH...

ZRRRRRRCH...

SQUILCH...

CRCCH

STEP

KRIEEK

SQNCH

SQUISH

SQUISH

GRIIK

KREEEEK...

AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST...

CRRRRRR

BWOOM

SHEBEBEBEBEN

PLAP

PLAP

"BU-CHIKA-MASHI.*"

A SHIELD THAT EXPANDS FROM THE BODY, MIMICKING A RAMMING ATTACK...

*The fierce initial collision between two sumo wrestlers.*

IS MODELED AFTER A SUMO WRESTLER.

AND HONEST-LY...

IN CASE YOU COULDN'T TELL, THE ARMOR...

WHOOSH!

bwomp

IT'S PRETTY LAME.

AND I DON'T MEAN LIKE, SO LAME THAT'S IT'S COOL. IT'S JUST LAME.

!!!

IT'S POWERFUL!

SLAM!

REGARD-LESS...

BACK WHEN I PLAYED SOL, THOUGH...

STELLA ONLINE

FOR THE SPECS I WANTED, THIS WAS MY ONLY CHOICE.

OF COURSE, NOW I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK OF IT AS MEME ARMOR...

KEEP IT UP!

YOU GOT THIS!

Full House

THE ANNOUNCERS ALWAYS KNEW HOW TO GET PEOPLE HYPED, SHOUTING, "THE STELLA ONLINE NEW YEAR'S PRO SUMO TOURNAMENT STARTS NOW!" OR "THIS MATCH WILL DECIDE THE VICTOR FOR THIS VENUE!"

THERE WERE TONS OF POWER ARMOR PVP MATCHES, AND THESE SUMO-THEMED ONES WERE ALL THE RAGE.

REALLY TAKES ME BACK...

PHEW.

I THINK THAT'S ALL OF THEM.

A rescue request just came in from the Guild!

The hospital is surrounded by those worm things.

Captain.

The one in Inagawa where we had our check-ups.

WHICH HOSPITAL?

And there are patients left behind inside.

GOT IT. I'LL HEAD FOR THE HOSPITAL. SHOW ME THE WAY.

WHAT ABOUT THIS AREA?

It seems that the Imperial Army will be there shortly.

UGH...

CLUNK

CLUNK

MUNCH

GLACH

GRAK

SNAK

CRNCH

SNAP

CRAK

ALSO...

I DOUBT THERE WILL BE, BUT IF THERE'RE ANY SURVIVORS NEARBY, LET ME KNOW.

THIS IS AWFUL...

HURK!

DON'T FORCE YOURSELF TO WATCH, MIMI.

カチ・CHK

No survivors on that street.

Go wild, Hiro.

カチ・カチ・CHK

YOU GOT IT!!

CLENCH

SHNK

KA-CHUNK

ALL RIGHT, YOU FILTH...

IT'S STERILIZATION TIME!!

TOOM!

BLAM!

SPLAT

BWOOM

GZRK

HONESTLY, I'M KINDA DISAP-POINTED.

.....

BRAP

BRAP

BRAP

BRAP

BRAP

CLANK

CLANK

THESE GUYS COULD TEAR THROUGH FLESH AND BLOOD, BUT AGAINST MY POWER ARMOR THEY'RE NO CHALLENGE.

AN IMPERIAL POWER ARMOR SQUAD COULD PROBABLY MOP THIS UP IN SECONDS.

SO I GUESS BEING ABLE TO EASILY EARN A BIT OF POCKET CHANGE BEFORE THEY GET HERE...

IS THE SILVER LINING TO THIS WHOLE SITUATION.

Take a right at the next inter-section.

?!

SK FFF

GLCH

GLCH

GLCH

UH-OH...

ZLRCH

ZLRCH

WRITHE

WRITHE

CHAK

NOW THAT'D BE SOMETHING.

WHY'RE THEY ALL OVER THE HOSPITAL ANYWAY?

Who knows? Maybe they want a check-up.

I GOTTA WONDER...

BOOM
I've never heard of anything like it before...
HURK!
BLAM
TYOOM!
DOES THIS KIND OF THING HAPPEN OFTEN?
If that were the case, meat cultivation plants would have already been shut down.
BOOSH

BIBIP
GOOD POINT.

This is Inagawa Technologies General Hospital Security!!
Are you from the Mercenary Guild?!
YUP.
THOOM!
I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF FULLY EXTERMINATING ALL THE CREEPY-CRAWLIES AROUND YOUR BUILDING.

YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT A HERMETIC HOSPITAL BARRIER, RIGHT?
WE CAN'T TAKE THESE MONSTERS LIGHTLY, BUT I DOUBT THEY COULD DESTROY THAT POWERFUL A BARRIER.
Thank god... Our barrier is right about to fail.
REALLY?

Most walls aren't gonna have corrosion resistance built in...

Normally, sure. But these things are excreting some kind of corrosive fluid.

WELL, THAT'S A PAIN.

BRAP

BRAP

NONE OF THEM HAVE BREACHED YET, YEAH?

Not yet, no.

BRAP

BRAP

BRAP

BRAP

BRAP

I'VE GOT THE PERIMETER UNDER CONTROL FOR NOW.

BLAM

BOOM

PLOP

PLOP

WHAT'S STRANGE ABOUT IT?

It's coming from between those buildings in front of you!!

Captain! I'm picking up something strange coming toward you!

GRRRLL...

KRAK

LOOOM

SQCH...

FWIP

GRRRLL...

FWIP

WOOSH!

THE HELL IS THAT THING?

ARE THOSE HUMAN EYEBALLS...?

?!

WHATCHU LOOKIN' AT?!

THWUM

P!

CRNCH!

SH-BAM!

WHOA!!

WHOOSH

THIS THING'S INSANELY FAST!!

?!

WHEEMS

SKRRRRRCCHH...

SMASH

GRAK

VWEEEEEEEEEM

?

?

GRRR

GOTTA LOVE MODERN TECHNOLOGY!

HA HA HA HA!

FWEEEEEE

BUT THIS FORCE FIELD CAN WITHSTAND METEOROID STRIKES! YOU'RE NOTHING!

YOU CAN FLEX AS MUCH AS YOU WANT...

SHOOK!!

SEE YA!

SHWUMP

GGER



Shff...

PHEW, THAT'S TH--

VWFF...

BLUP

BLOP

OH, COME ON...

IT'S REGENER-ATING?

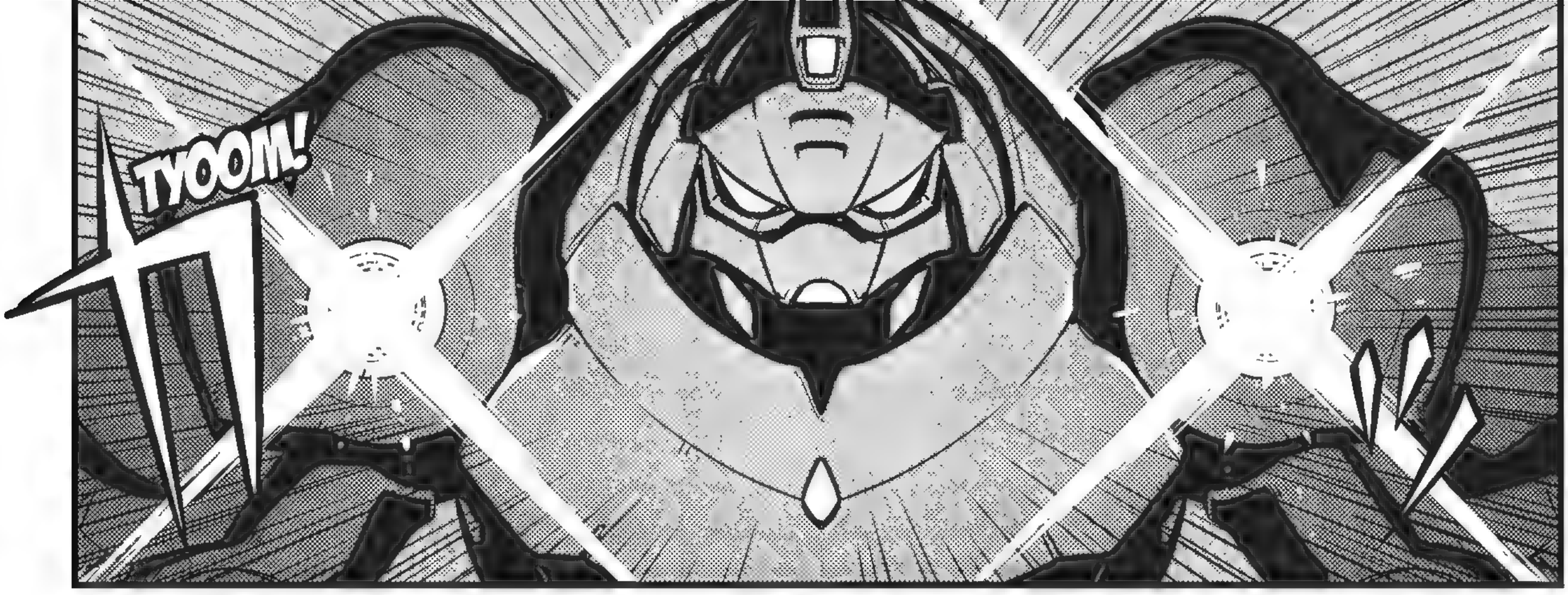
WHAT THE HELL...?

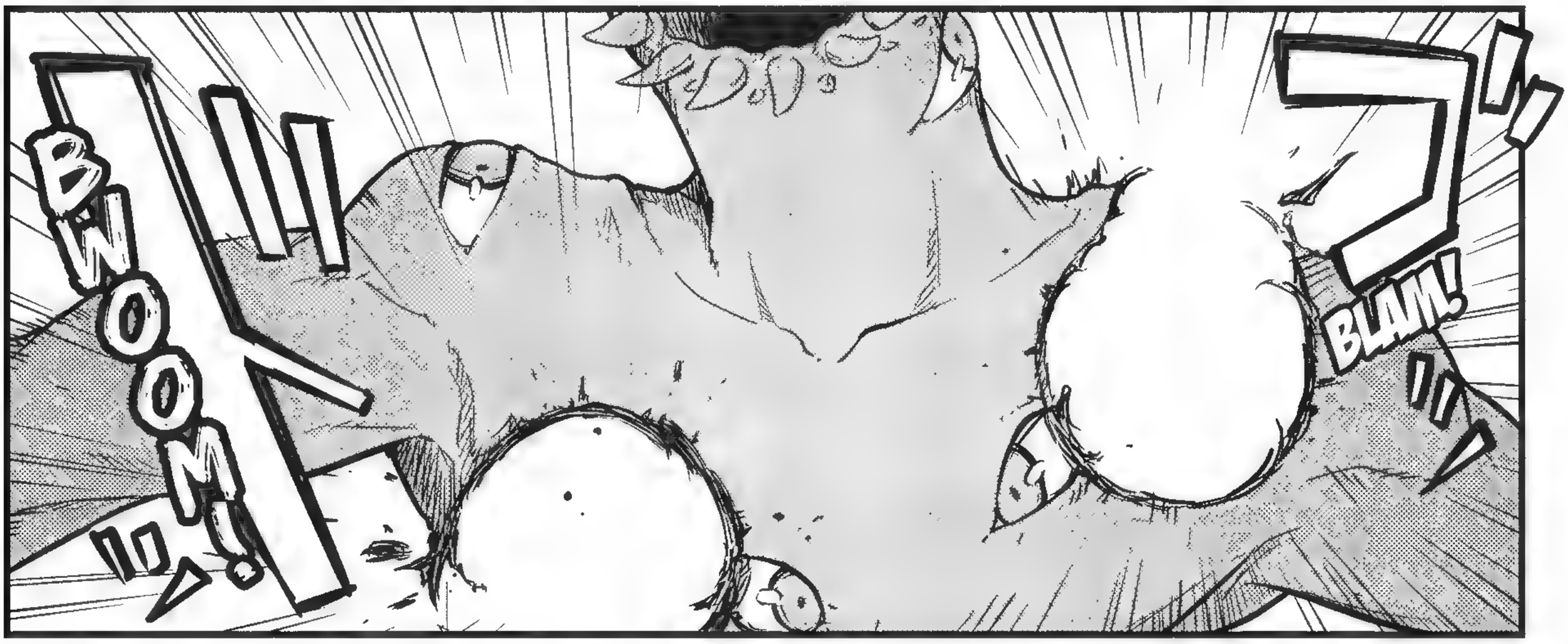
GRRRRP

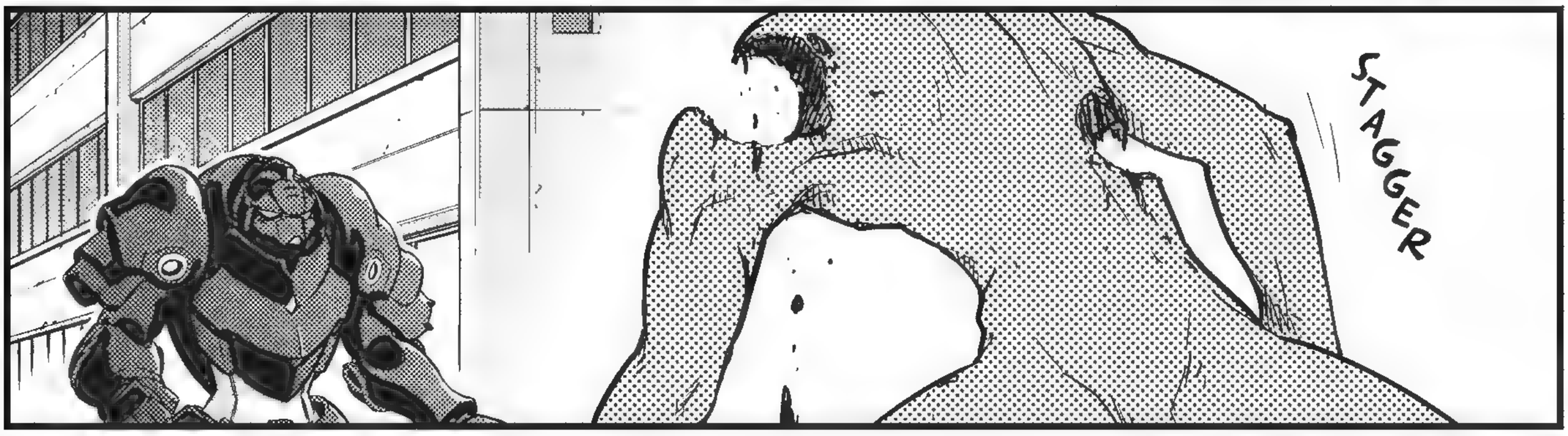
THAT'S JUST NOT FAIR.

# REBORN AS A SPACE MERCENARY

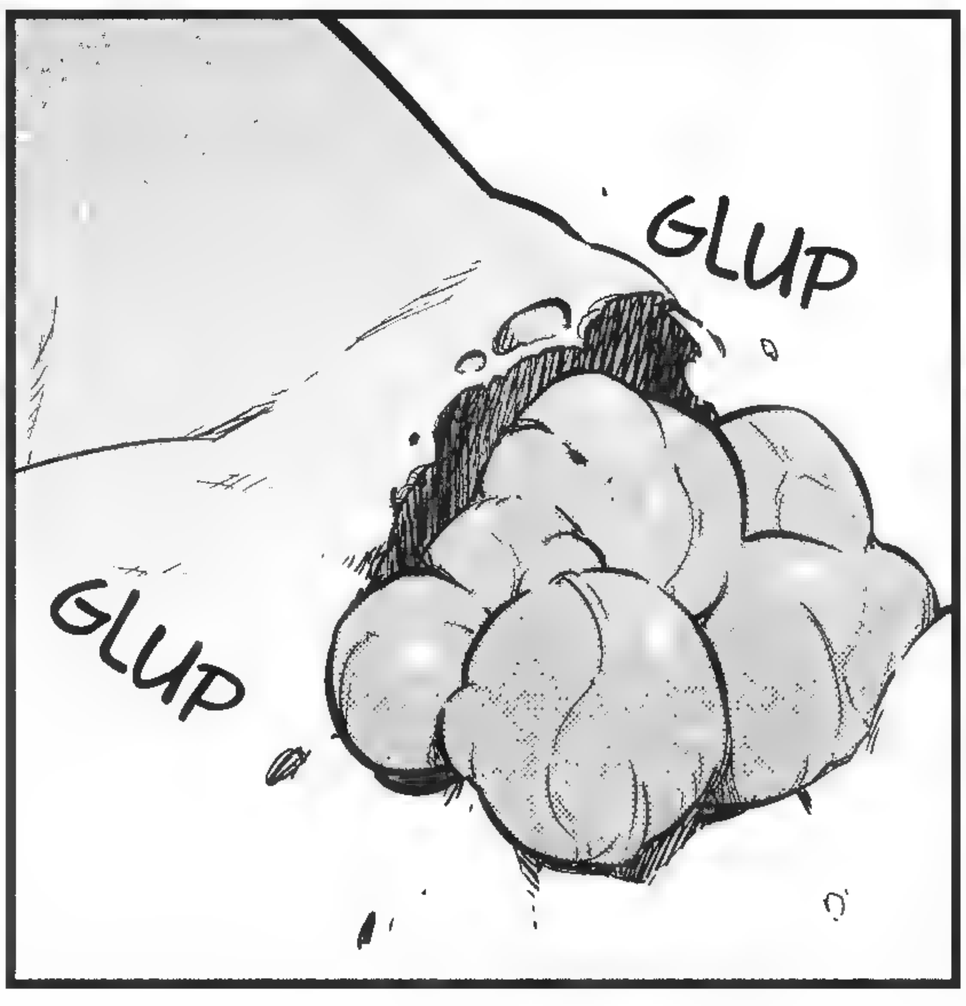
I WOKE UP PILOTING THE **STRONGEST STARSHIP!**


TYOOM!


BWOOM!
BLAM!


STAGGER

POP


GLUP
GLUP

DAMN IT!!!

GRAAH!

くやっ

GRRRR

BLUP

BLUP

SERIOUSLY, THAT'S NOT FAIR!!!

SKREEEEEEEEEEEE

GZRT

GZRT

GZRT

GZRT

SLAM!

SEEMS LIKE THIS THING RELIES ON BRUTE FORCE, SO IT CAN'T PENETRATE MY FORCE FIELD.

HMM... NOW WHAT?

GRAB

TYOOM!

BWOOSH!

BZZRT

BZZRT

BZZRT

BZZRT

BZZRT

AND I'M HITTING IT WITH LETHAL ATTACKS.

IT HAS DEFENSIVE POWERS JUST LIKE THE OTHER WORMS...

SKF

THE PROBLEM...

STAGGER

FORGET THE HITS TO ITS LIMBS, I PRACTICALLY BLEW ITS HEAD OFF... IT'S GONNA TAKE A REAL SERIOUS HIT TO STOP IT FROM REGENERATING.

IT JUST KEEPS GOING...

IS ITS INFINITE REGENER-ATION.

KRIK

KRAK

KRAK

BLOP

BLOP

I'M GONNA RUN OUT OF BATTERY BEFORE THAT THING DOES...

E

F

BIBIP

AND AT THIS RATE...

HRMM... I DIDN'T WANT TO RESORT TO THIS...

BEEP

BUT I DON'T HAVE ANY CHOICE.

BEEP

FZSH...

TSKIRRR

KRK

WHOOSH!

SHUNK!

shup

VWSH

KA-CHNK

LOCK

LOCK

LOCK

YES!! GOT YOU NOW!!

NOW, IF I LOCK ALL THE ARMOR JOINTS...

VRR-KLUNK!

CHF

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

A BIT STUCK THERE?

RRROOOOOAAAARRRR!

ACK!

CHK

YEESH, YOU TALK TOO MUCH.

CLINK

?

HERE, EAT PLASMA GRENADE!!

SHWIP

WISH

HUP!

PLAK

GULP

VWEEE

BWOOM!

WOA!

GLOW

.....

chak

krak

klik

PEEK

fsssshhhh...

SQSH
SQSH
GUESS EVEN THAT THING CAN'T REGENERATE WITH A GUT FULL OF SUPERHEATED PLASMA.
WHAT A PAIN...
SHAK
BEEP

I TOOK SOME PRETTY HEAVY DAMAGE TOO, OF COURSE.

NOTHING CRITICAL... I SHOULD STILL BE ABLE TO MOVE...

LET'S UNLOCK THE JOINTS...

Captain!!

Are you okay?!

BLEEEEEP!

HUH?

I was so scared when your power armor lost signal!

AH, SORRY ABOUT THAT.

*Phew!* Thank goodness!

YUP, NO WORRIES.

THE POWER ARMOR IS STILL MOBILE, SO I'M GOOD.

THAT SAID...

ANYHOO, THE THINGS ON THE HOSPITAL, AND THAT BIG GUY, ARE DEALT WITH.

About those...

KSSSHT

WHAT ABOUT THE REMAINS OF THESE THINGS?

DO I JUST LEAVE 'EM HERE?

So I can make nano-machines to get rid of the rest of them.

A SAMPLE? WHAT FOR?

The hospital has requested that you take a sample.

Hey, hey! Been a minute!

DOCTOR SHOKO?

UH-HUH...

You saved my life once again.

Talk about fate!

I SWEAR, SHE HAS ZERO SENSE FOR DANGER.

WELL, I'M USING POWER ARMOR.

ANYWAY...

Wow, look at all those! You did this solo?

OH, AND ONE OF THEM WAS A BIT DIFFERENT...

That'll be plenty.

THESE THINGS CAME IN ALL DIFFERENT SIZES.

IS A SAMPLE FROM ONE OF EACH SIZE GOOD ENOUGH?

WILL THIS DO?

BY THE WAY, WHAT WAS IT LIKE FIGHTING THOSE THINGS?

But yeah, should be okay.

*Ooh,* looks crispy...

THEY WERE NO MATCH FOR MY POWER ARMOR IN TERMS OF STRENGTH AND DEFENSE.

ALL EXCEPT...

*HMM,* WELL, MOST OF THEM DIDN'T ACT INTELLIGENTLY.

IT SEEMED MORE INSTINCTUAL, LIKE THEY WERE ACTING ON APPETITE ALONE.

IT WAS PRETTY FEROCIOUS AND SEEMED GENUINELY AGGRESSIVE.

OH, AND ITS REGENERATIVE CAPABILITY WAS INSANE.

THIS ONE.

That was the most danger-ous thing about it.

.....

DOCTOR?

*Hm?* Oh, sorry!

?

I see... I wonder if it was a mutation. We'll look into it.

Anyway, I should be getting to work on those nano-machines.

.....

BZRT

FWIP FWIP

See ya later!

Thanks again for the save, and the sample collection.

I DON'T KNOW IF IT WAS THE ADDED PRESENCE OF A FULL-SCALE MILITARY SQUAD OR WHAT...

BUT THERE WERE NO FURTHER MONSTER ATTACKS, AND THINGS WERE BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL.

AFTER THAT, AT INAGAWA'S REQUEST, I HELPED OUT WITH SECURITY AROUND THE HOSPITAL.

THANKS.

HERE. NICE WORK OUT THERE.

WITH THE POWER ARMOR, IT WAS DOABLE, THOUGH.

NEVER SEEN THIS DRINK BEFORE...

YEAH, I GUESS SO.

I HEARD YOU JUST GOT BACK FROM A MILITARY OPERATION. MUST BE TIRED, NO?

PSSSSSSHHHH

WELL, IT WAS COVERED IN MONSTER JUICE, SO WE CAN'T HAVE YOU HEADING BACK WITHOUT CLEANING IT OFF.

DON'T MENTION IT.

OH, THANKS FOR LETTING ME USE THE SHOWER HERE.

YOU'RE EVEN DECONTAMINATING THE POWER ARMOR FOR ME. I REALLY APPRECIATE IT.

MY WORK IS DONE. SO, BARRING ANYTHING UNUSUAL, THERE'S NOTHING LEFT FOR ME TO DO.

YOU MEAN THE NANOMA-CHINES?

AND WHAT ABOUT THINGS ON YOUR SIDE?

SPLSH
SPLSH
SPLSH

SORRY, BUT...

BASED ON THAT REAC-TION...

.....

Sigh.

SCRTCH SCRTCH

I HAVEN'T HEARD A PEEP FROM INAGAWA SINCE THE HIJACKING...

DOES IT HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH MY STOLEN DNA?

.....

WELL, AS LONG AS IT'S NOT A THREAT TO MY SAFETY OR THAT OF MY CREW.

SIP

?

THIS IS POC*RI...

AFTER THE WHOLE MONSTER INCIDENT, IT TOOK FIVE DAYS FOR THE COLONY TO RETURN TO NORMAL.

AS WE'D GUESSED, THE MONSTERS HAD COME FROM THE MEAT CULTIVATION PLANT.

MEANWHILE, THE FULL STORY BEHIND THE INCIDENT CAME TO LIGHT.

FOLLOWING THIS REVELATION, AN ORGANIZATION CALLED THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF ARTIFICIAL LIFE, APAL, CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY.

THEIR APOPTOSIS PROGRAMMING HAD BEEN REMOVED VIA GENE EDITING, AND THEIR AGGRESSION INCREASED.

THEY SPOUT ALL SORTS OF EXAGGERATED DOGMA, BUT HONESTLY...

BIP

THEY'RE LIKE A FUTURISTIC VERSION OF NATURE CONSER-VATION OR ANIMAL RIGHTS GROUPS.

CAPTAIN HIRO.

THE SECOND THEY RESORT TO BIOTERRORISM, IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT POINTS THEY RAISE.

tak

INAGAWA SENT US A FRUIT BASKET...

HM?

OOOOH!

"APOLOGIES FOR THE INCONVE-NIENCE," HUH...?

WOW! CAPTAIN, THESE ARE REAL FRUITS!

ERM...

?

SHF SHF

ARE THOSE...?

HIGH-PURITY RARE METALS, YEAH...

DOCTOR SHOKO'S PRETTY SLY...

HMM, GUESS I'LL HOLD OFF ON SUING THEM.

THAT WAS QUITE THE PAYDAY.

S-SEVEN-TEEN...

YOU'VE GOT OVER SEVENTEEN MILLION ENER IN SAVINGS NOW.

REALLY?

YEAH, JUST NOW, THE PAYMENT FROM THE MILITARY AND THE PORT AUTHORITY CAME THROUGH.

WHAT'S THAT?

HMM... WITH THAT, I COULD PROBABLY BUY A MOTHERSHIP.

A SHIP LARGE ENOUGH TO HOLD SMALLER SHIPS.

ALSO, A SHIP OF THAT SIZE HAS HIGH-CAPACITY CARGO SPACE, SO WE COULD TAKE ON CARGO TRANSPORT MISSIONS.

BASICALLY, WE CAN DO A WIDER ARRAY OF WORK AND MAKE MORE MONEY DOING IT.

YOUR MONEY SENSE IS SOMETHING ELSE, CAPTAIN...

YEAH, THAT FIGURES. BETTER SAVE UP A BIT MORE.

BUT HIRO, YOU DO REALIZE THAT SEVENTEEN MILLION ENER WON'T GET YOU A *GOOD* MOTHERSHIP, RIGHT?

*NOT TO MENTION THE COSTS OF REMODELING.*

ANYHOW, NOW THAT I'M DONE WITH THAT JOB FOR PRINCESS SERENA...

THERE'S NO POINT IN HANGING AROUND THIS SYSTEM ANY LONGER.

HOW ABOUT WE HEAD FOR THAT RESORT SYSTEM MIMI WAS TALKING ABOUT?

YEAH, WE CAN ENJOY A LITTLE VACATION...

AND EARN SOME MORE MONEY WHILE DECIDING WHETHER OR NOT TO GO FOR A MOTHERSHIP.

OKAY!

LET'S GET GOING RIGHT AWAY.

THINGS ARE ALL SETTLED AROUND HERE, SO WE JUST NEED TO FINISH RESUPPLYING...

YAAAAAAAAAYY!!
AND THEN WE'RE OUTTA HERE!

ピンポーン
DING DOOONG

THAK

WHO COULD THAT BE?

DUNDUN

NOT SO FAST!

OH...

to be continued

REBORN AS A

# SPACE MERCENARY

I WOKE UP PILOTING THE **STRONGEST STARSHIP!**

SEVEN SEAS ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

# REBORN AS A SPACE MERCENARY

## I WOKE UP PILOTING THE STRONGEST STARSHIP! Vol.4

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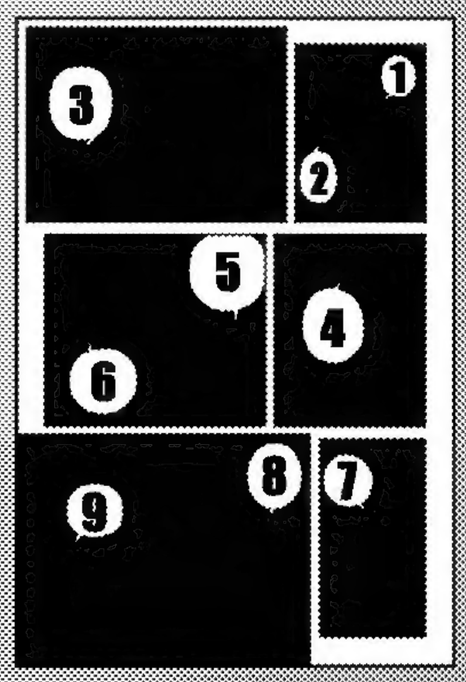
## READING DIRECTIONS

This book reads from ***right to left***, Japanese style. If this is your first time reading manga, you start reading from the top right panel on each page and take it from there. If you get lost, just follow the numbered diagram here. It may seem backwards at first, but you'll get the hang of it! Have fun!!



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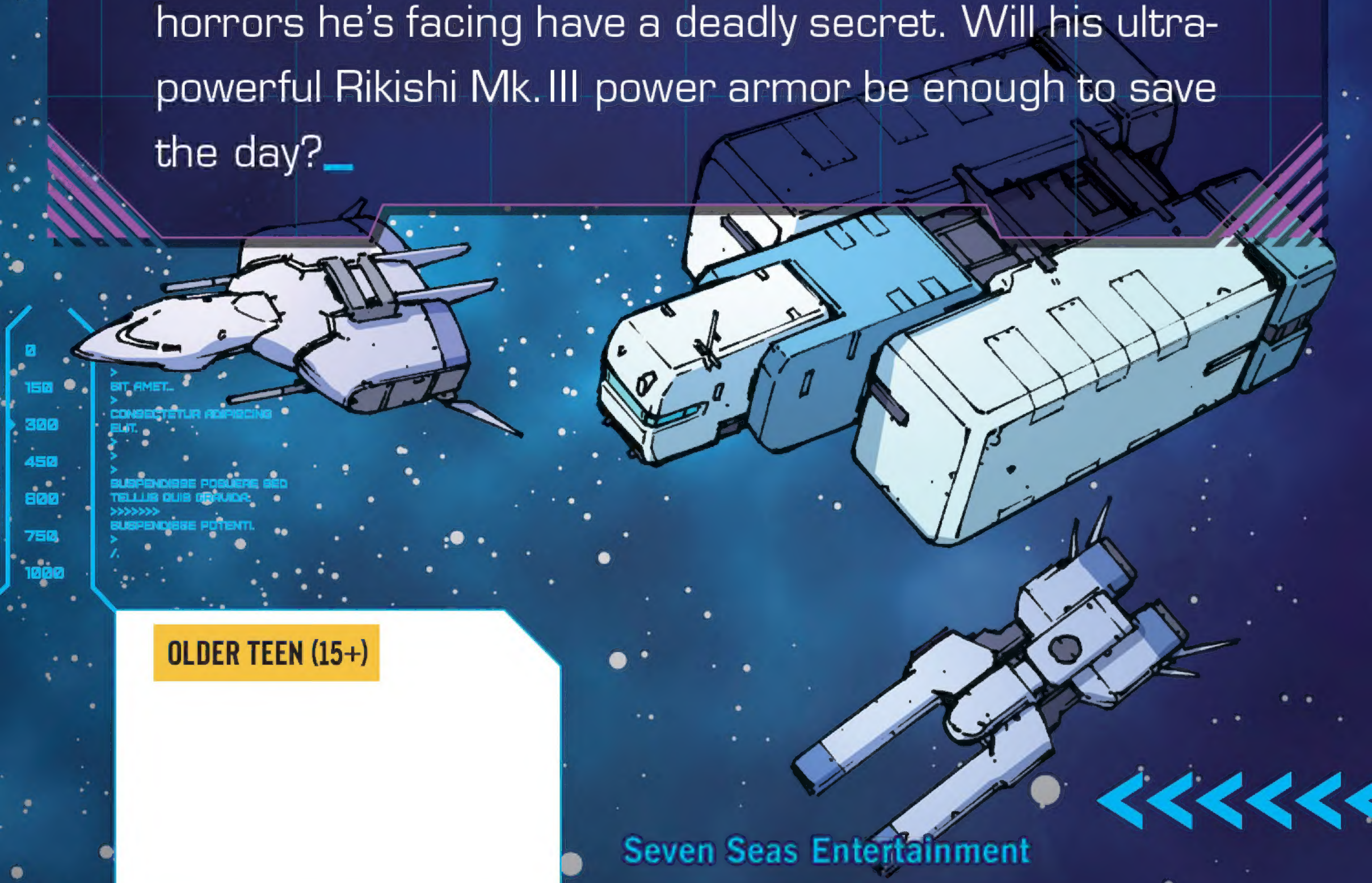
Hand-to-hand fighting is not Hiro's specialty, and the horrors he's facing have a deadly secret. Will his ultra-powerful Rikishi Mk. III power armor be enough to save the day?



OLDER TEEN (15+)

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